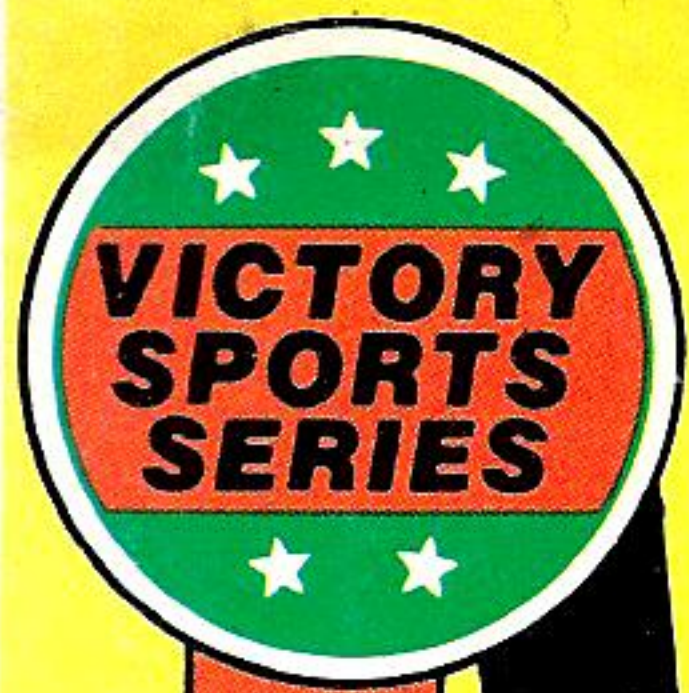




WRESTLER
THE

**ANDRE THE GIANT VS. TERRY FUNK...
FOR THE NWA TITLE!**

47951



August 1976

\$1.00

THE **Wrestler**



EXCLUSIVE:

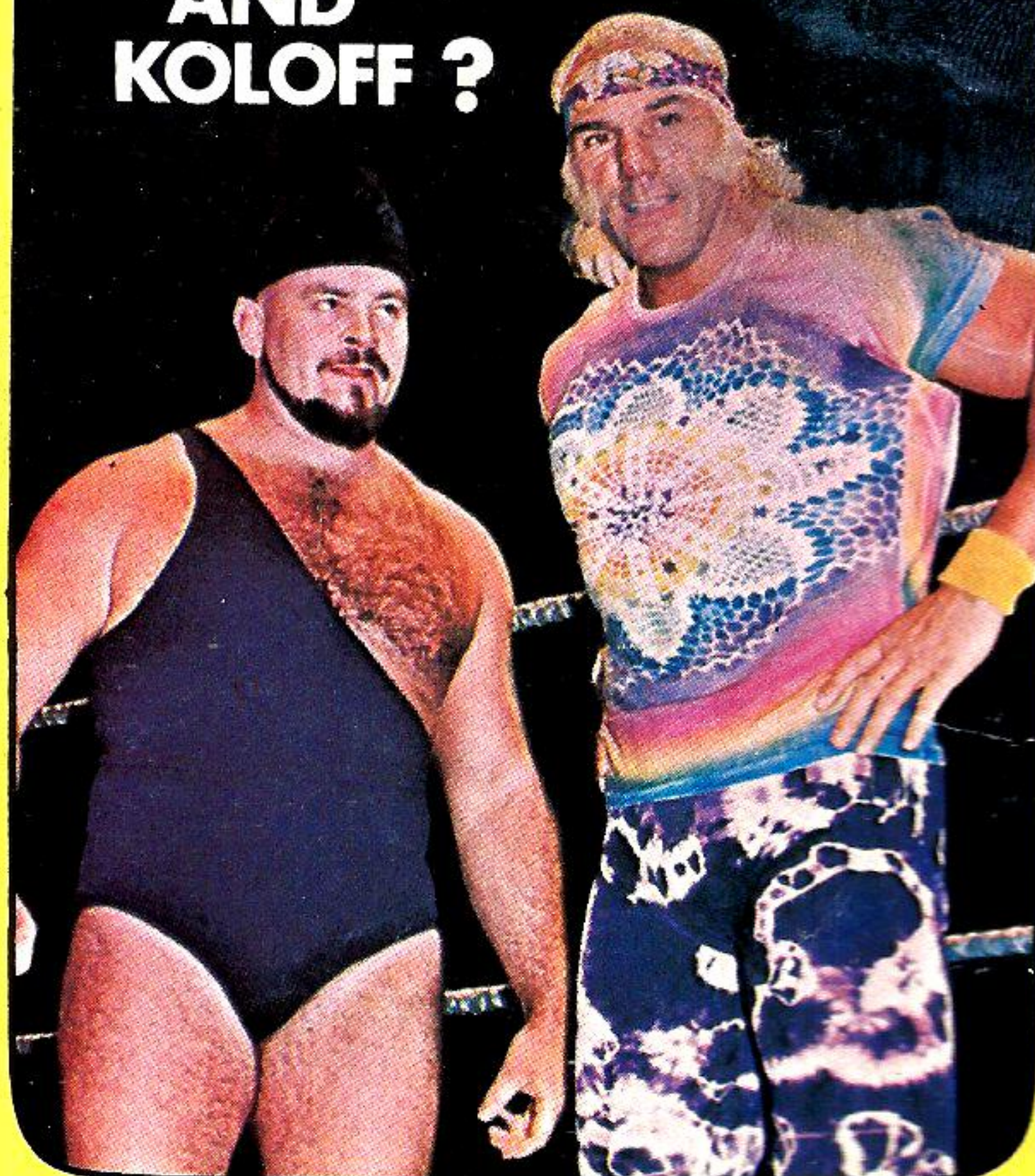
**BRUNO
SAMMARTINO'S
OWN STORY..**

**"THE DOCTORS
TOLD ME I'D NEVER
WRESTLE AGAIN!"**



08

**IS THERE TROUBLE
BREWING BETWEEN
SUPERSTAR
AND
KOLOFF ?**



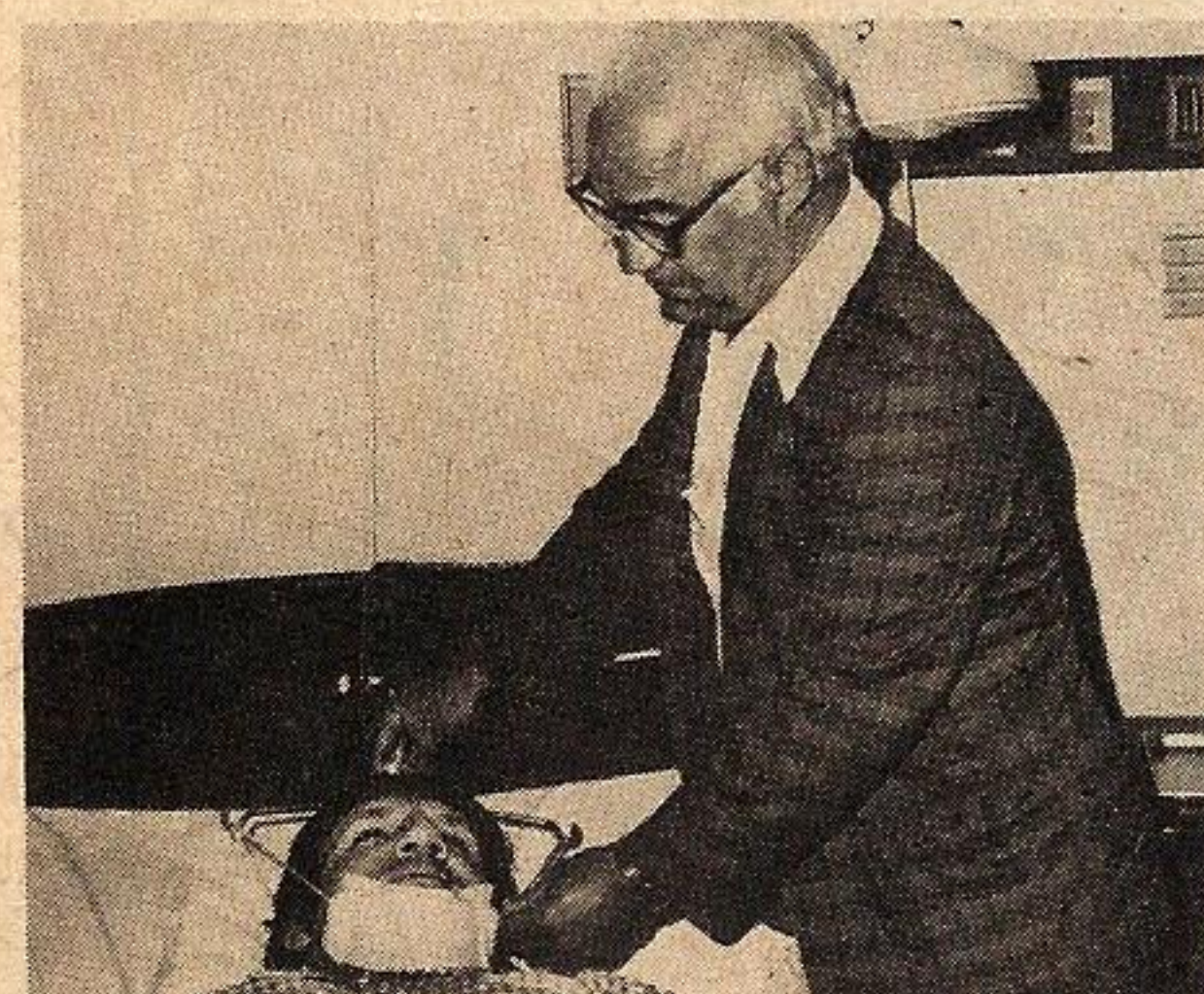
**The Question
Terrifying Wrestling:
WILL DUSTY RHODES
BECOME A
"BAD GUY" AGAIN?**

**The Experts
Declare...**

**RIC FLAIR
IS THE NEXT
CHAMPION OF
THE WORLD!**

Wrestler

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THE WRESTLER is published monthly by T.V. Sports Inc., Box 58, Rockville Centre, NY 11571. Single copy price \$1.00; annual subscription rate \$9. Not responsible for loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage. No part of this magazine can be reproduced without written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.

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OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS

WORLD WIDE WRESTLING FEDERATION

CHAMPION: BRUNO SAMMARTINO

- 1—STAN HANSEN
- 2—SUPERSTAR BILLY GRAHAM
- 3—IVAN PUTSKI
- 4—IVAN KOLOFF
- 5—BOBO BRAZIL
- 6—ERNIE LADD
- 7—CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW
- 8—SCANDOR AKBAR
- 9—DOMINIC DENUCCI
- 10—LOUIS CYR

AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

CHAMPION: NICK BOCKWINKLE

- 1—VERNE GAGNE
- 2—LARRY HENNIG
- 3—PAMPERO FIRPO
- 4—BOBBY DUNCUM
- 5—JOE LEDUC
- 6—BLACKJACK LANZA
- 7—BARON VON RASCHKE
- 8—MAD DOG VACHON
- 9—GREG GAGNE
- 10—CHRIS TAYLOR

MOST POPULAR

- 1—BRUNO SAMMARTINO
- 2—MIL MASCARAS
- 3—DUSTY RHODES
- 4—IVAN PUTSKI
- 5—CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW
- 6—MR. WRESTLING II
- 7—ANDRE THE GIANT
- 8—PEDRO MORALES
- 9—CHAVO GUERRERO
- 10—PAUL JONES

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

CHAMPION: TERRY FUNK

- 1—JACK BRISCO
- 2—DUSTY RHODES
- 3—BLACKJACK MULLIGAN
- 4—PAUL JONES
- 5—BILLY ROBINSON
- 6—DORY FUNK JR.
- 7—FRITZ VON ERICH
- 8—MR. FUGI
- 9—HARLEY RACE
- 10—JERRY LAWLER

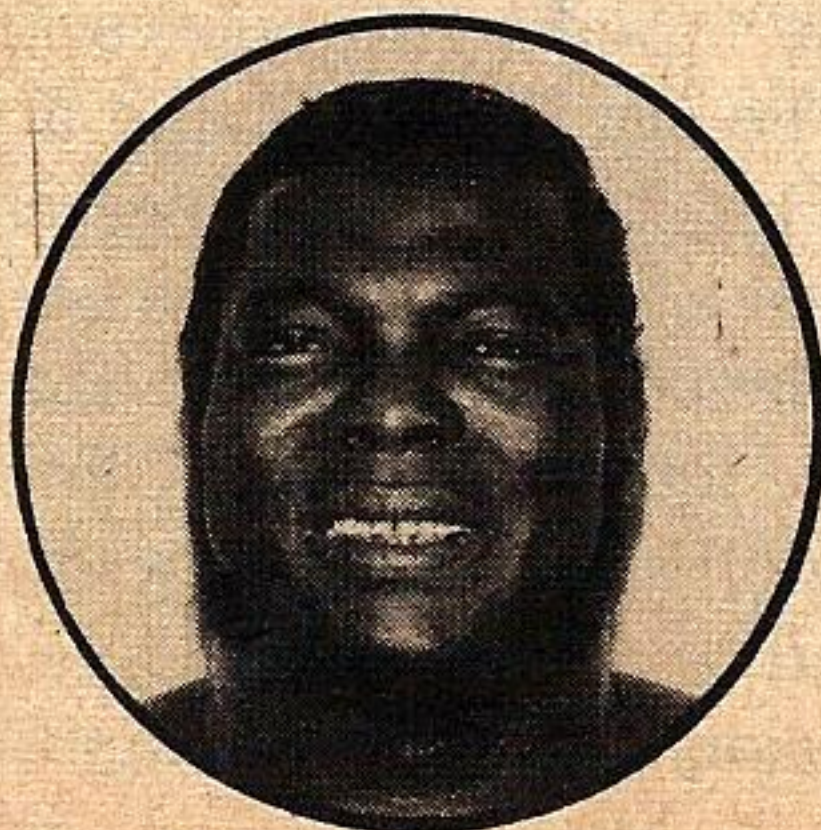
TAG TEAMS

- 1—THE ANDERSON BROTHERS
- 2—THE MASKED EXECUTIONERS
- 3—BRUISER & CRUSHER
- 4—THE MONGOLS
- 5—BOB ORTON JR. & BOB ORTON SR.
- 6—CHAVO GUERRERO & JOHN TOLOS
- 7—THE VALIANT BROTHERS
- 8—MIKE & EDDIE GRAHAM
- 9—CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW & BILLY WHITE WOLF
- 10—THE BOUNTY HUNTERS

WOMEN

CHAMPION: FABULOUS MOOLAH

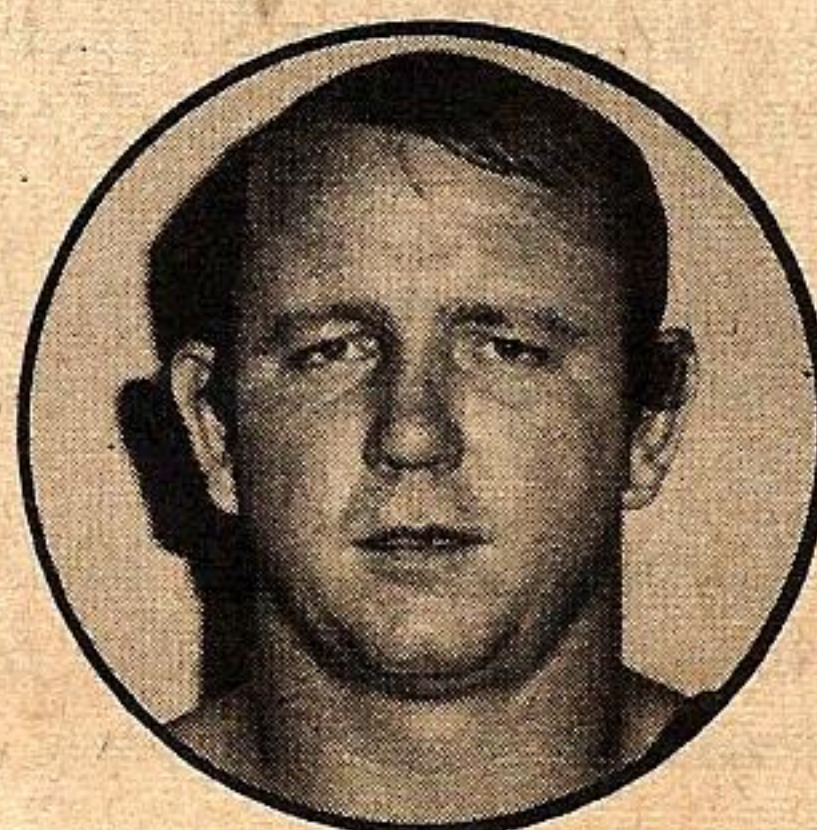
- 1—SUE GREEN
- 2—VICKI WILLIAMS
- 3—DONNA CHRISTENELLO
- 4—BETTY NICCOLI
- 5—SUSAN SEXTON
- 6—KITTY ADAMS
- 7—JOYCE GRABLE
- 8—VIVIAN ST. JOHN
- 9—JEAN ANTONE
- 10—BELLE STARR



BOBO BRAZIL



CRUSHER



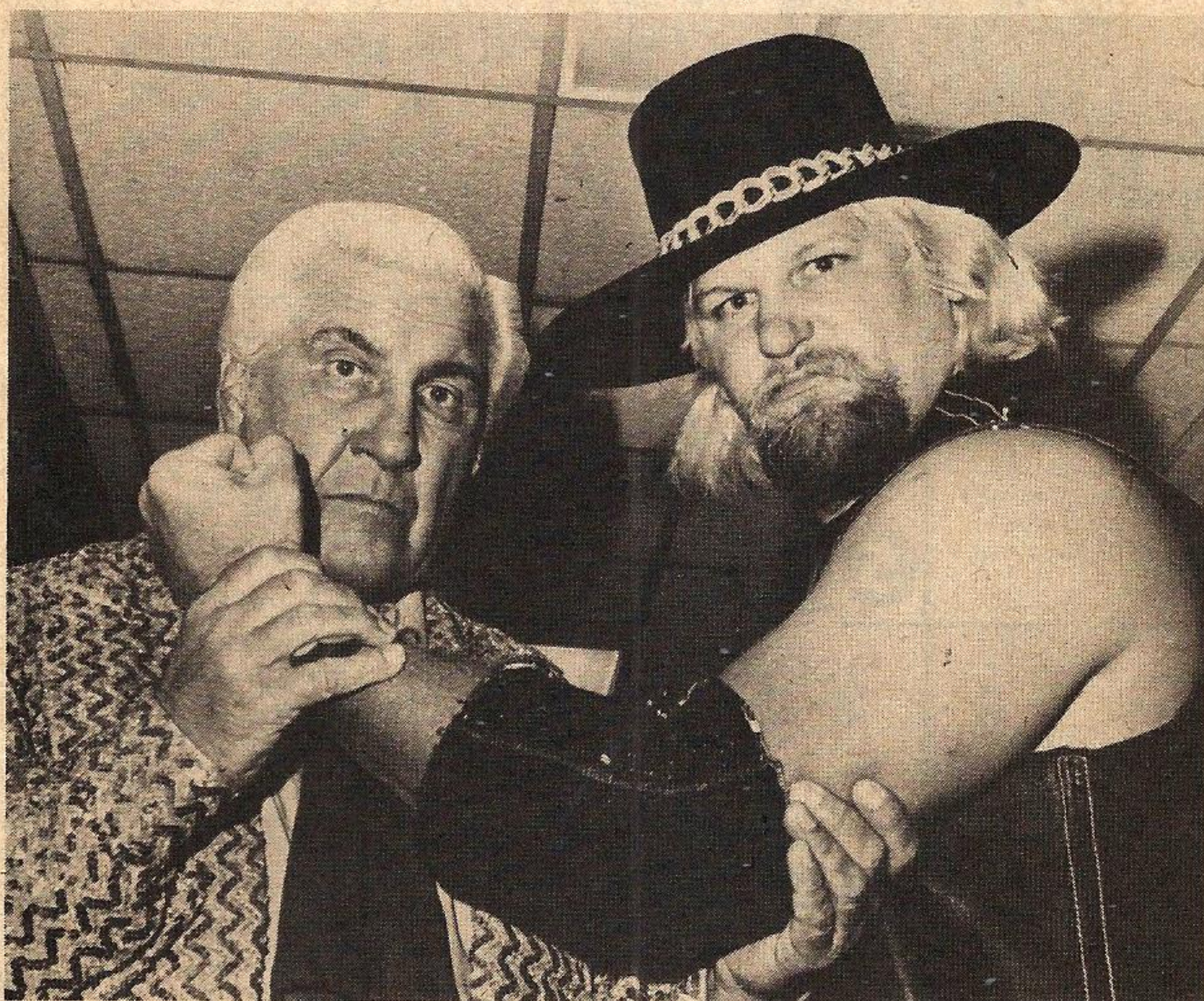
DORY FUNK JR.



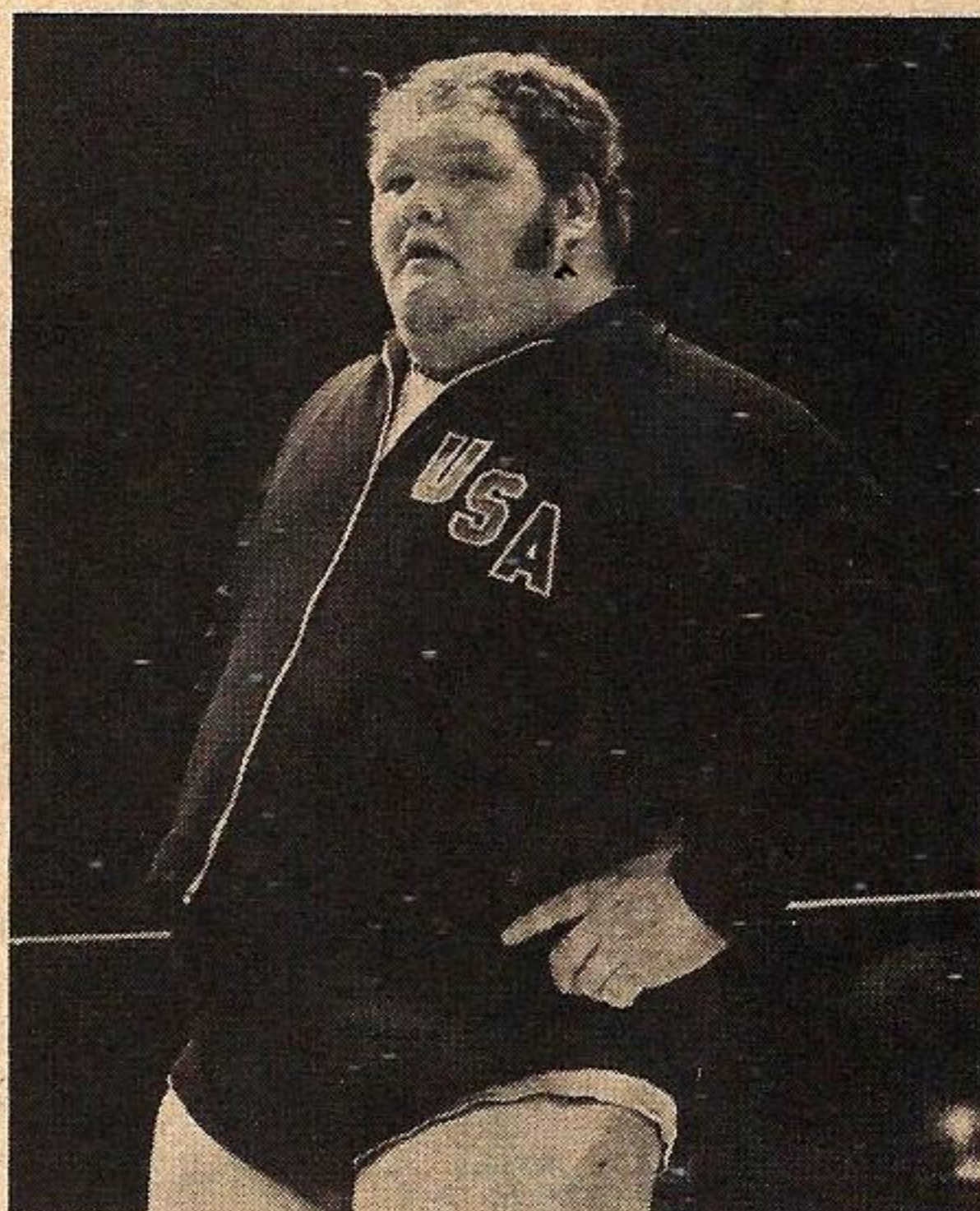
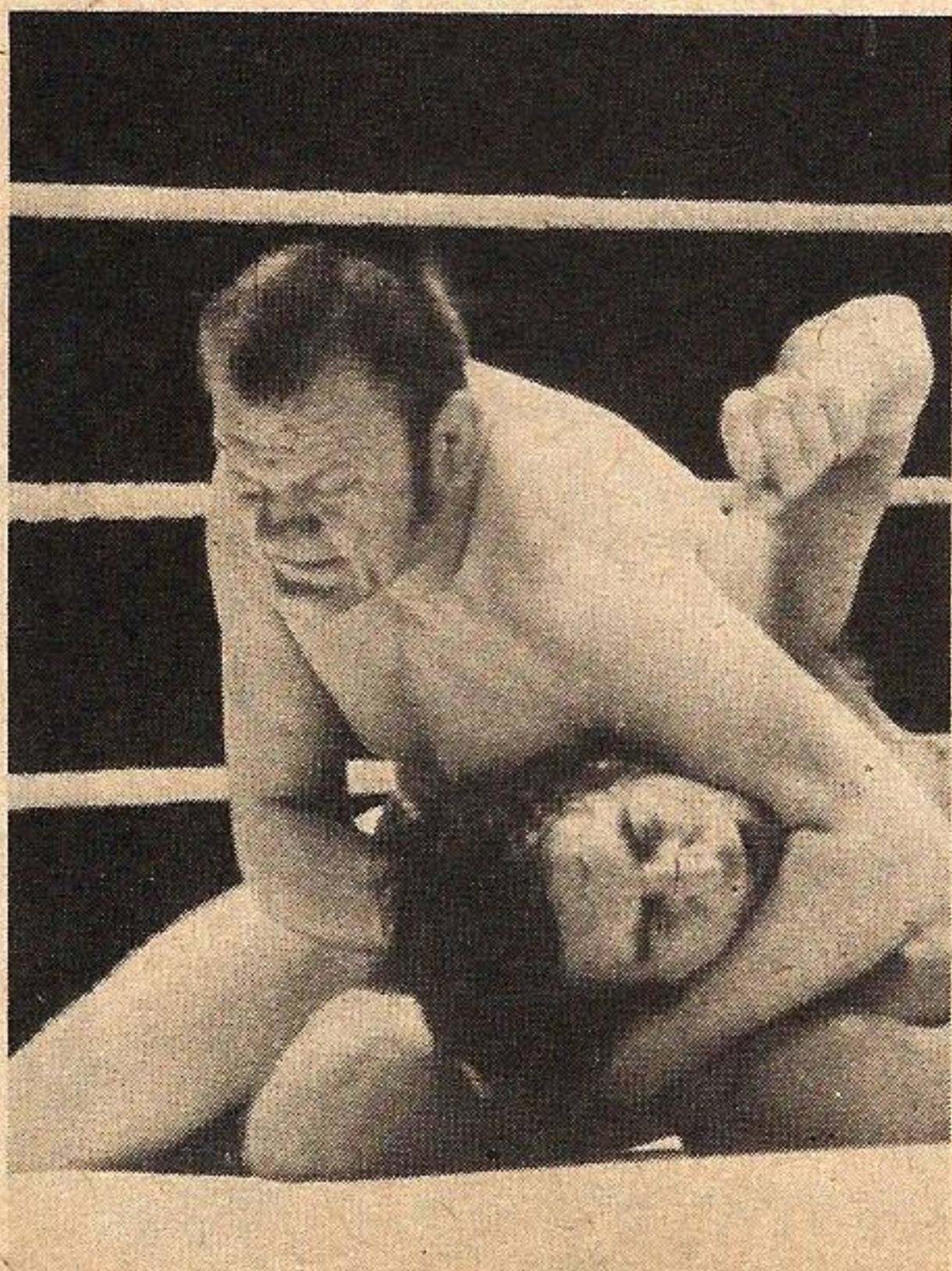
DONNA CHRISTENELLO

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING, BABY!

By Bill Apter



Above: Freddie Blassie proudly holds the arm of Stan Hansen, the arm responsible for Bruno Sammartino's injury. Below: Jack Brisco and Gene Kiniski before becoming a tag team.



Chris Taylor is tired but very happy after winning the first battle royal in Omaha wrestling history. Congratulations, sir!

AFTER BUSTING Bruno Sammartino's neck with his dreaded "lariat" maneuver, Stan Hansen eliminated another name from manager Fred Blassie's "Most Wanted List." Stan brutally attacked Polish star Ivan Putski with the lariat. Ivan, like Bruno, was sent to the hospital.

The incident took place during their match at New York's Madison Square Garden—the same place where Hansen broke Bruno's neck. Ivan was a bloody mess as special police helped him to his dressing room. Minutes later, after receiving several stitches, Ivan was taken to a New York hospital for X-Rays and observation after complaining of back and neck pains. He was released shortly afterward. His injury was not as serious as Bruno's.

Hansen and Blassie claim they have several other wrestlers for whom they have planned the same. All have one thing in common: They've all had feuds against Blassie. "And now I'll pay 'em back for all the lousy things

they did to me in the past!" exclaims Blassie. "My bounty hunter Hansen will cripple 'em all!"

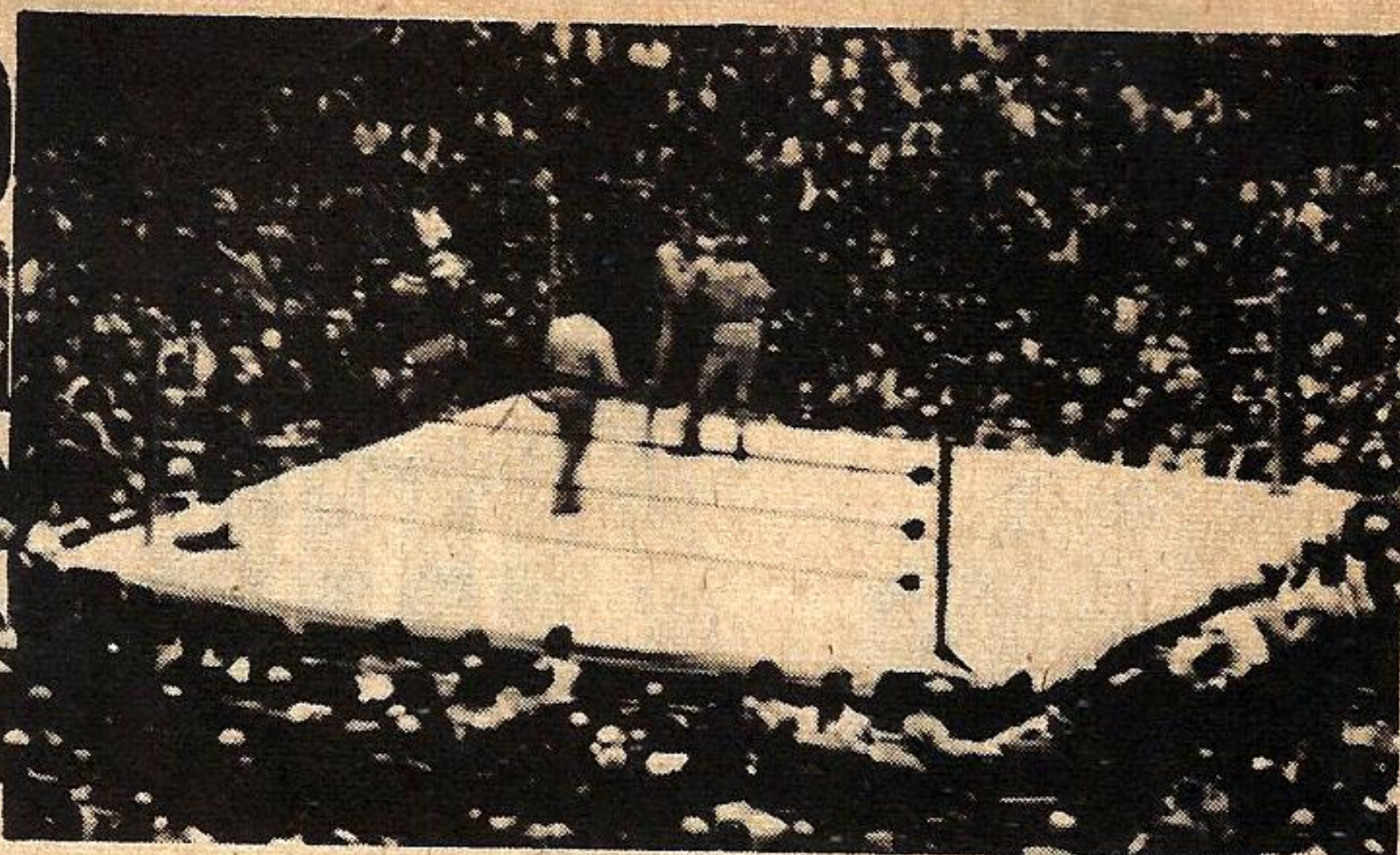
We refused to believe it when we first heard it, and so will you. Jack Brisco teamed with his old enemy, Gene Kiniski! The two, paired by St. Louis Missouri, promoter Sam Muchnick, squared off against Terry Funk and Dory Funk Jr.

"We're professionals," Brisco said. "Sure Kiniski and I have had our problems—and they're not all behind us yet—but when that bell sounds, we forget that and work as a team." It's also important to note all four participants in that battle held the NWA heavyweight title. Of course Terry Funk currently holds the NWA top honor.

Bob Roop continues to keep trying to have the figure-four leglock banned in NWA areas after Mike and Eddie Graham broke his leg with the hold . . . Billy White Wolf and Chief Jay Strongbow chasing the Masked Executioners and their WWWF tag team

(Continued on page 52)

YOUR LETTERS



APPRECIATE BRUNO

Since reading "Superstar" Billy Graham Learns Bruno Is Still the Best," (THE WRESTLER/May 1976), I personally feel Bruno Sammartino is the best wrestler to ever come along.

Bruno has done more for wrestling and its fans than any other wrestler. When Sammartino retires from wrestling, I hope all of us in the world of wrestling will appreciate what he has done. I know I will.

PETER KNOBLOCH
Queens, N.Y.

HE HAD A RIGHT

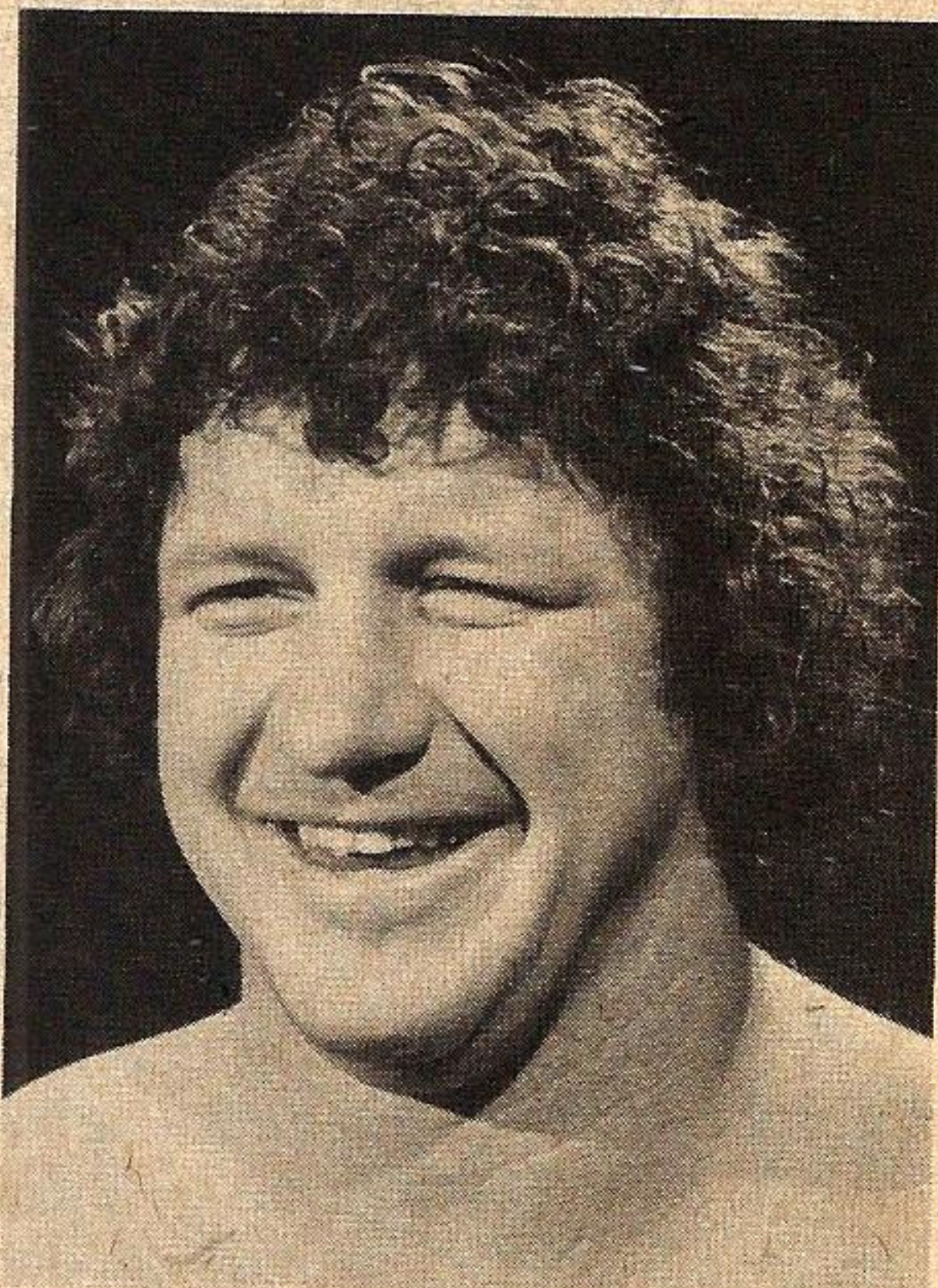
In THE WRESTLER/March 1976, Mrs. Terry Donnelly blasted Terry Funk, calling him a bum, and citing what Funk said about Jack Brisco. Since her letter was written, Terry has gone on to win the NWA title.

Well listen here, Mrs. Donnelly: Terry Funk had a right to say all he did about Brisco, because Jack was one of the most unpopular champions of all time. I was happy to hear Funk won the title.

Don't get me wrong. Jack Brisco is a great wrestler. He had a great collegiate career at Oklahoma State. He is a fan favorite and a scientific grappler in the professional ranks. But don't ever say anything bad about Terry Funk again, until you know what you are talking about! Terry Funk made you eat your words when he legally won the belt from Brisco. You probably broke down and cried!

Terry Funk will be the NWA champion for a long time to come. He will defend his title against all top contenders, including Jack Brisco. So before you blast Terry again, think twice!

Terry Funk is my favorite wrestler.



Happy Terry Funk knows he has fans who will defend both his angry words and tough action.

Anyway, it was about time a new champion was crowned. Terry Funk was just the right guy!

CHRIS DeMARCO
Jamestown, N.Y.

WELCOME ADDITION

After reading your article, "Dusty Rhodes—Just a Step Away from Funk's Crown" (THE WRESTLER/May 1976), I felt I had to write. I've been watching Dusty's career progress for the last four years, and I must say I'm quite impressed.

Never have I seen a wrestler go from being one of the most hated men in the sport to eventually possess what is probably the largest army of fans in the country. Since I live in WWF territory, I have never been allowed the pleasure of viewing the "American Dream" in action. He would definitely

be a welcome addition to our area, since he has a great number of followers here now.

In closing, let me just extend an open invitation to you, Dusty Rhodes. Come to the WWF in the near future, if you can. You will probably be the NWA champion within a year anyway.

RAY HOLDEN
Westerly, R.I.

NOT IN AMARILLO

I think Dusty Rhodes is a braggard. He thinks he can beat Terry Funk for the NWA championship. He really should know better than that!

I think Terry would tear him to shreds. Dusty is very good, but Terry Funk is much better. After all, if Terry weren't good, he would not be champion.

I also doubt Dory Funk Jr. would go against his brother since Terry did not go against Dory when the elder brother was NWA champion.

DWANE HAMMONDS
Amarillo, Tex.

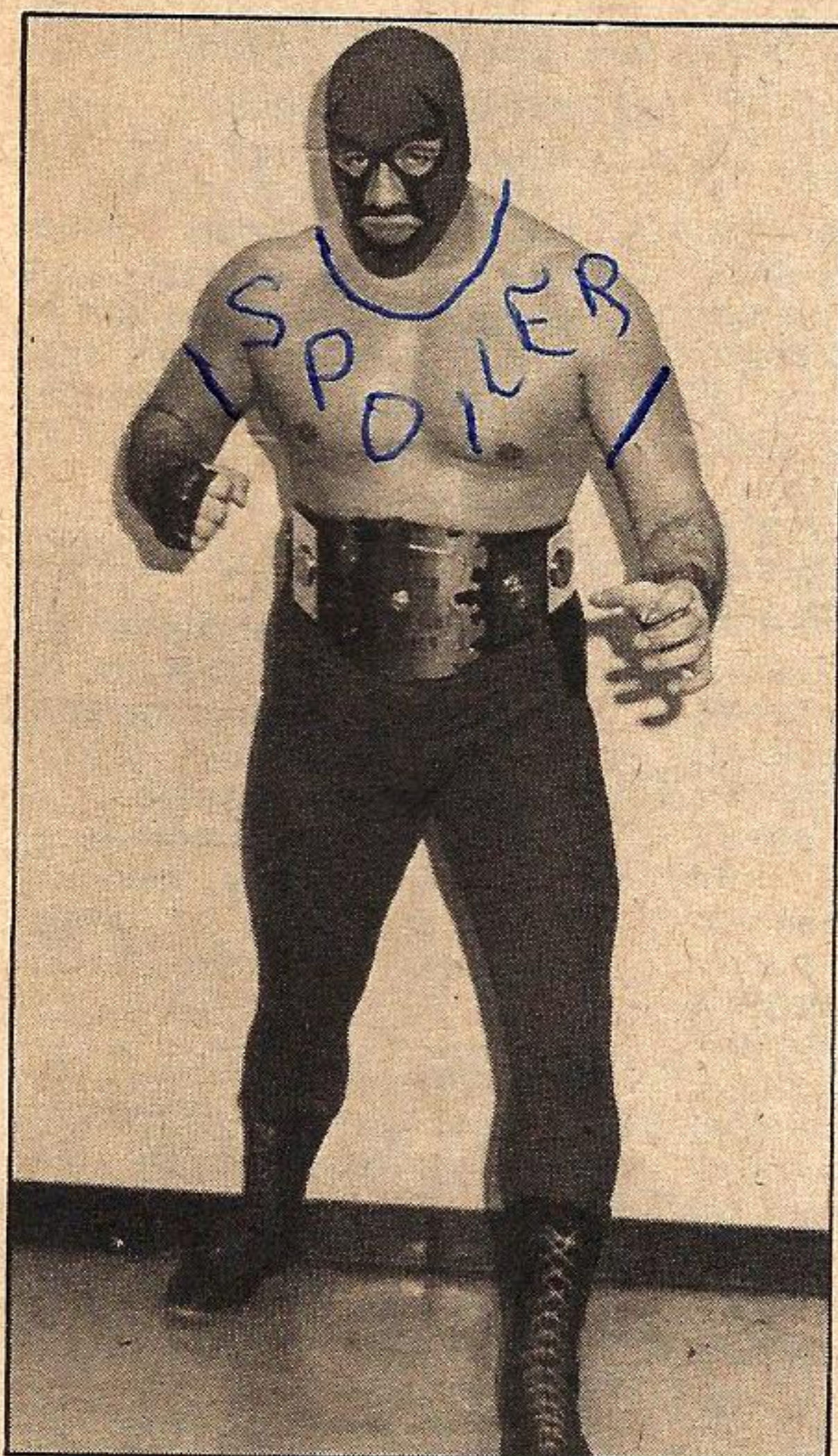
SHOCKING, BUT SMART

I was shocked by your story, "The Secret Agreement Between The Sheik and Mil Mascaras" (THE WRESTLER/May 1976). I can only hope these two men never see each other again!

Isn't there enough unnecessary violence in wrestling without trying to promote a death in the ring? That Los Angeles promoter trying to make a rematch between Mil and The Sheik should be thrown out of the sport. It is men like him who could cause the downfall of wrestling.

SEAN DeVILLE
Atwater, Calif. □

CORRESPONDENTS Reports



NWA Georgia champion Spoiler managed to hold off the very determined challenge of the masked great, Mr. Wrestling II.

If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports, while also being officially credited with your own by-line, send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area. So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

Send your reports to: Correspondent Editor, Box 58, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571.

MISSISSIPPI MADNESS By Thelma Brimm

THE SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN bet \$300 against the hair of Terry and Glen Anthony in a tag team match. For his partner, the Southern Gentleman chose the Crusader.

The first fall was won by the Anthonys. The second fall went to the Southern Gentleman and Crusader in a contest which displayed the pair's consummate cruelty. All was riding on the last fall.

Almost instantly, the match became a brawl. The referee tried to restore order, but he became a victim of the Southern Gentleman's rage. The hapless official was punished with a series of piledrivers before he could stop the match and declare "no contest."

Soon, the feud will be battled to the bitter conclusion.

GEORGIA REPORT By Ronnie Sanders

Savannah wrestling fans were delighted by the fantastic contest between NWA Georgia champion Spoiler and challenger Mr. Wrestling II.

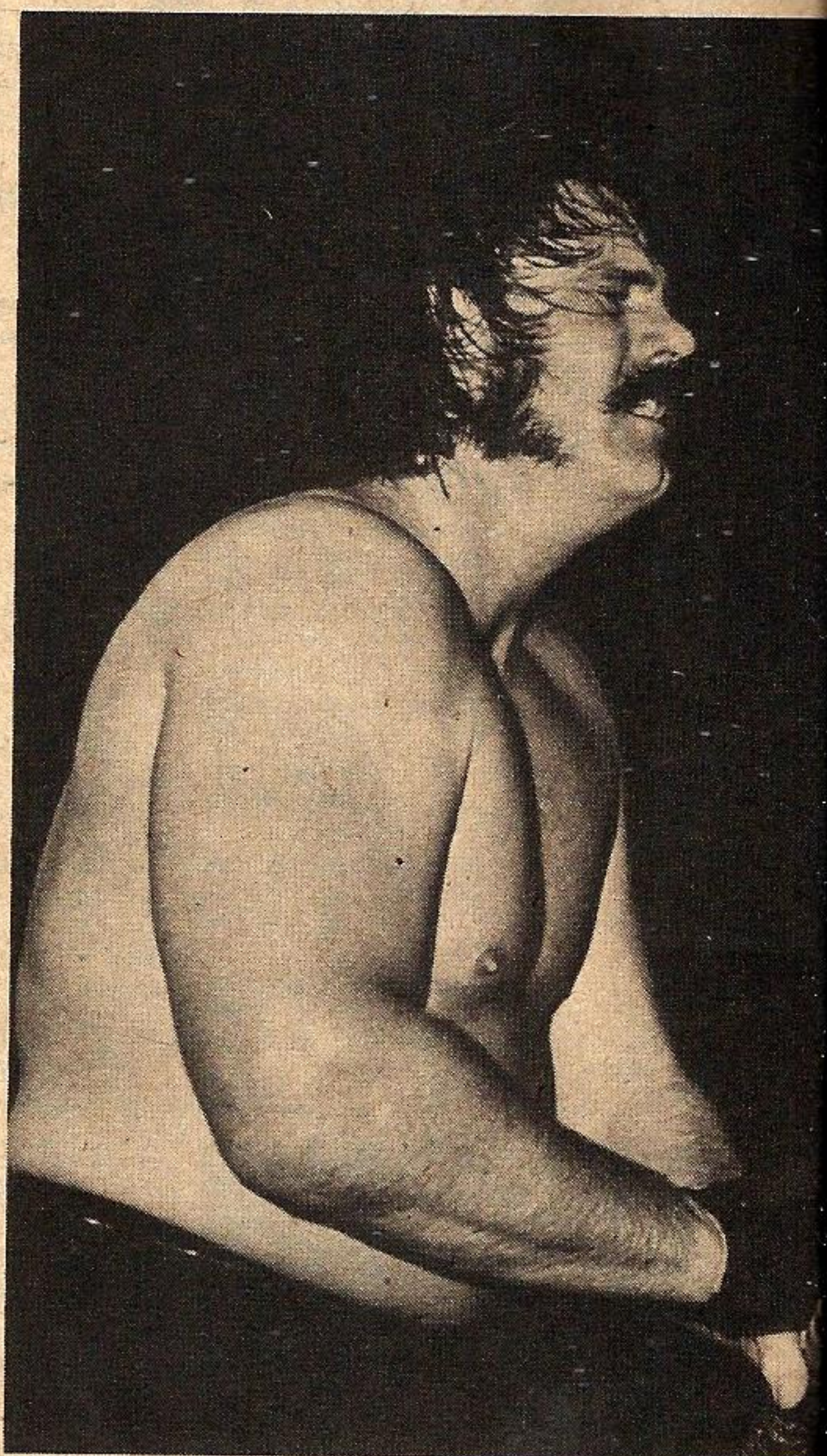
Spoiler leaped from his corner at the sound of the bell and assaulted his masked foe with a series of forearm smashes and stomps. Mr. Wrestling II came back with a perfect kneelift. Then it was a furious battle with neither man gaining an advantage. Finally, a desperate Spoiler, narrowly avoiding being pinned, got himself disqualified, losing the match but keeping his title.

Savannah fans are waiting impatiently for Mr. Wrestling II's next chance for the championship honors!

CAROLINA CHAOS By Tim Roney

Greensboro Coliseum was the scene for what many consider the theft of Paul Jones' U.S. title by Blackjack Mulligan.

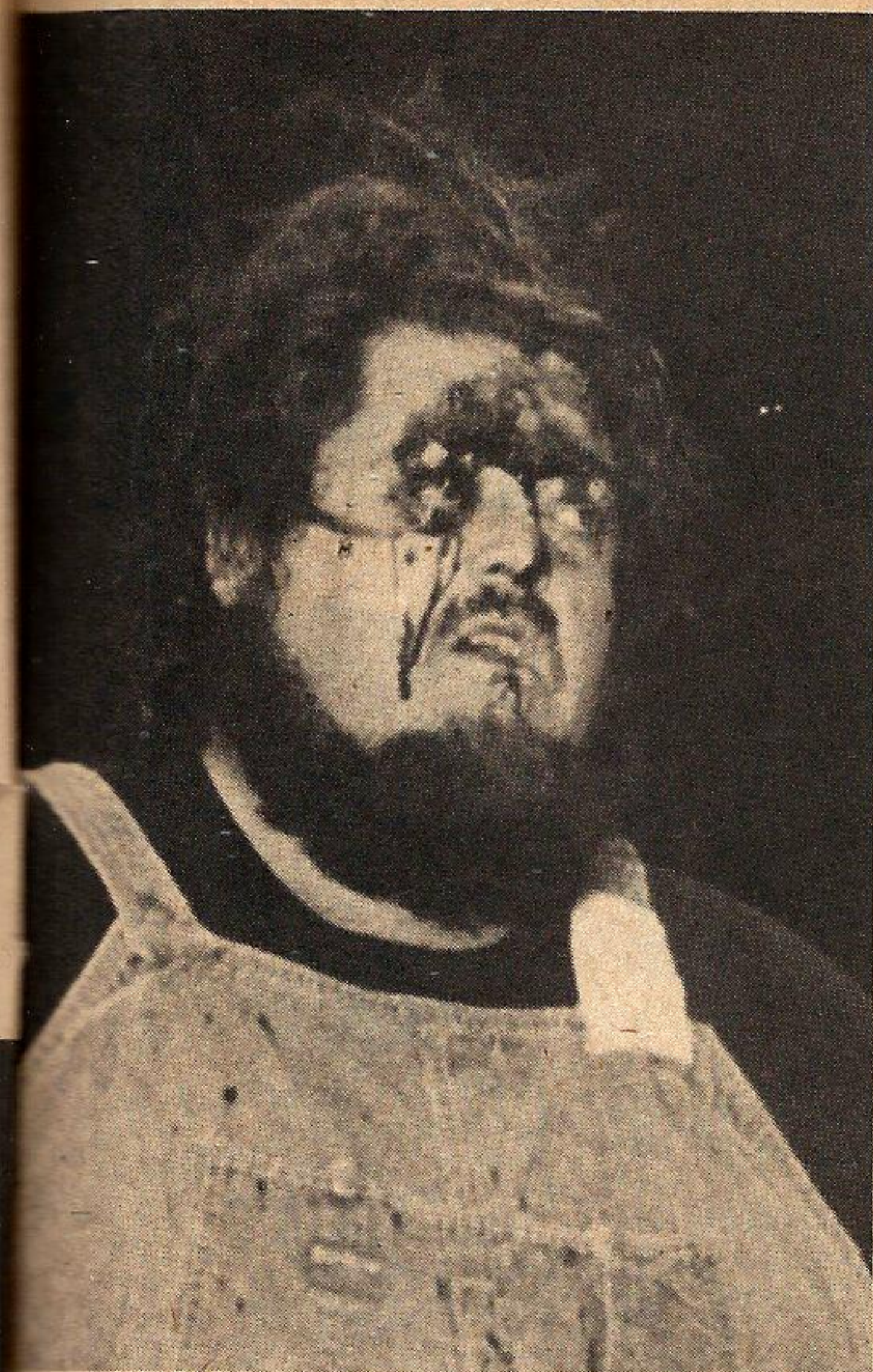
The match was fairly even for 25 minutes. Then Mulligan captured Paul and only touching the ropes saved the champ from certain destruction. Once free, Paul recovered quickly by capturing his foe in an Indian Deathlock. This time, it was Blackjack who sought the



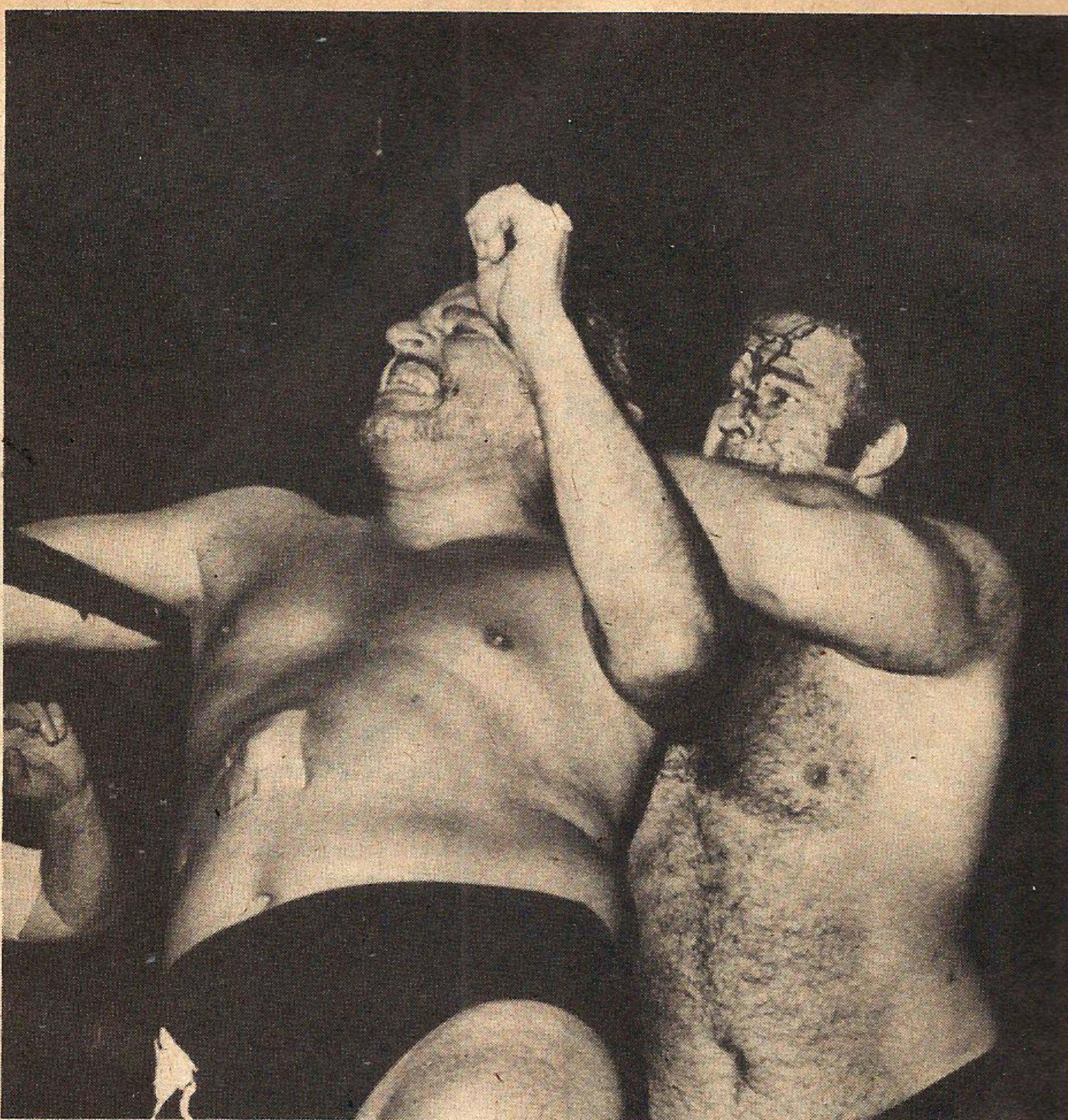
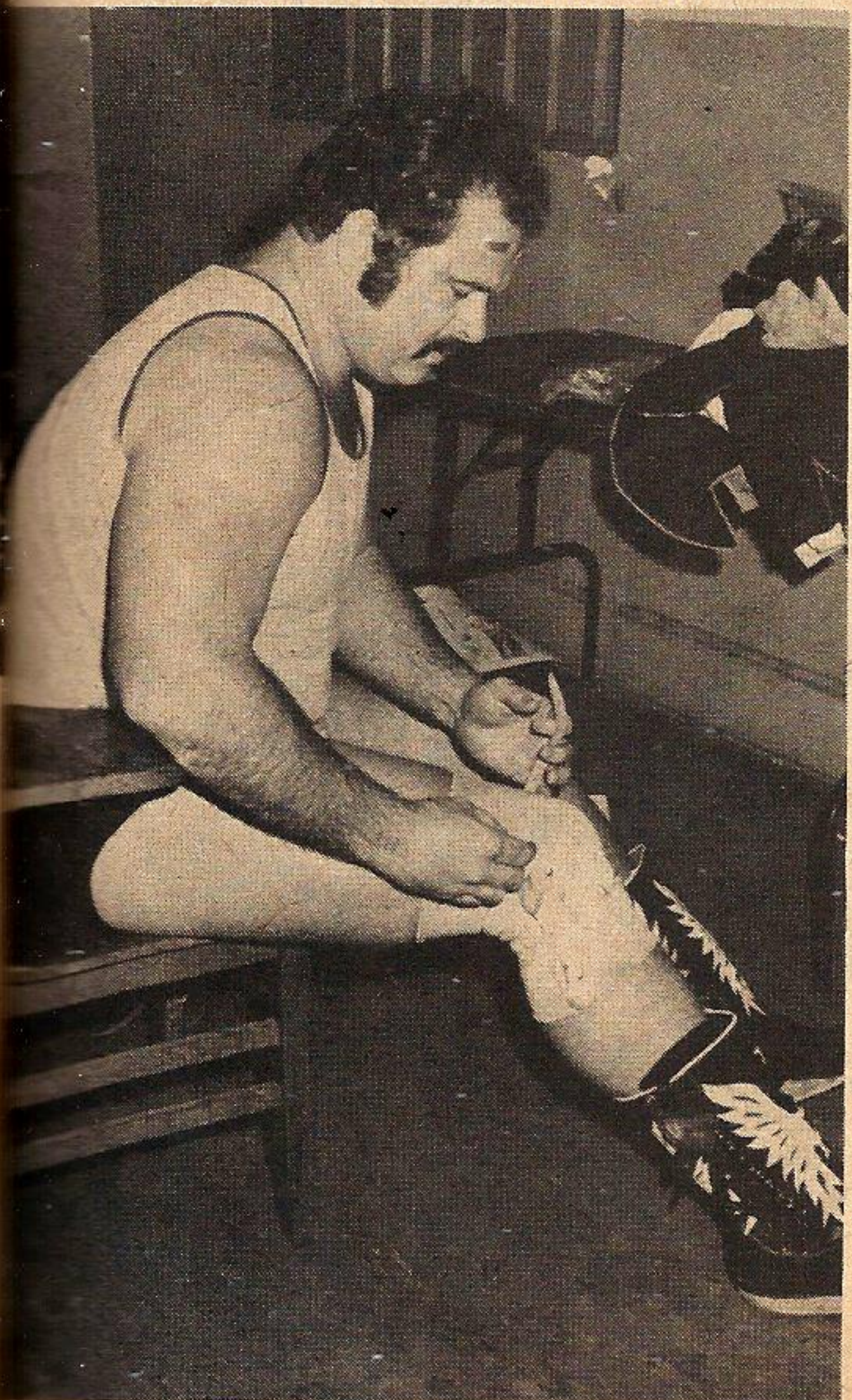
Blackjack Mulligan is groggy from pain during his title bout against Paul Jones. Mulligan finally resorted to illegal tactics—and won the match!

ropes. Though Paul had to release his hold, he was still in command. A worried Mulligan then resorted to dirty tactics.

Many fans saw Mulligan slip a metal weight into his glove. One punch later, Jones was unconscious and Mulligan the new champion.



Above: Filling in for injured Bruno Sammartino, Haystacks Calhoun is bloodied by Ivan Koloff. Right: Sheik and his longtime enemy, Mark Lewin, brawl in their latest match. Below: Bill Watts is preparing to challenge champion Terry Funk for the NWA title belt.



CONNECTICUT CAPERS By Vas. Chiacu

Filling in for his friend, injured Bruno Sammartino, Haystacks Calhoun battled Ivan Koloff. Fans soon forgot their disappointment over not seeing Bruno in the excitement of this confrontation.

The match started off fairly scientific. Then Koloff lost his cool and used dirty tactics to make Haystacks bleed. As he felt the blood pouring down his face, Haystacks went berserk. Soon both men were bleeding and punching wildly.

Referee Tony Altimore tried to stop them, but he wound up getting punches by the pair. To save his skin, Altimore quickly disqualified both grapplers.

ONTARIO ACTION By Neill Spiegel

The Memorial Auditorium in Kitchener was the battlefield for The Sheik against Mark Lewin.

As might be expected from The Sheik, the match wasn't a minute old before he unveiled his plastic knife. With experienced cruelty, he slashed at Lewin. Mark stumbled

out of the ring where a fan handed him a foreign object. He accepted the weapon and returned to the fray equally armed.

Mark proved he was skilled himself in the use of foreign objects. He drove The Sheik out of the ring and there the brawl continued. The referee counted both men out. Once the brawl was officially over, Sheik scurried for the sanctuary of his dressing room.

LOUISIANA BATTLING By Kelly and Bo Rogers

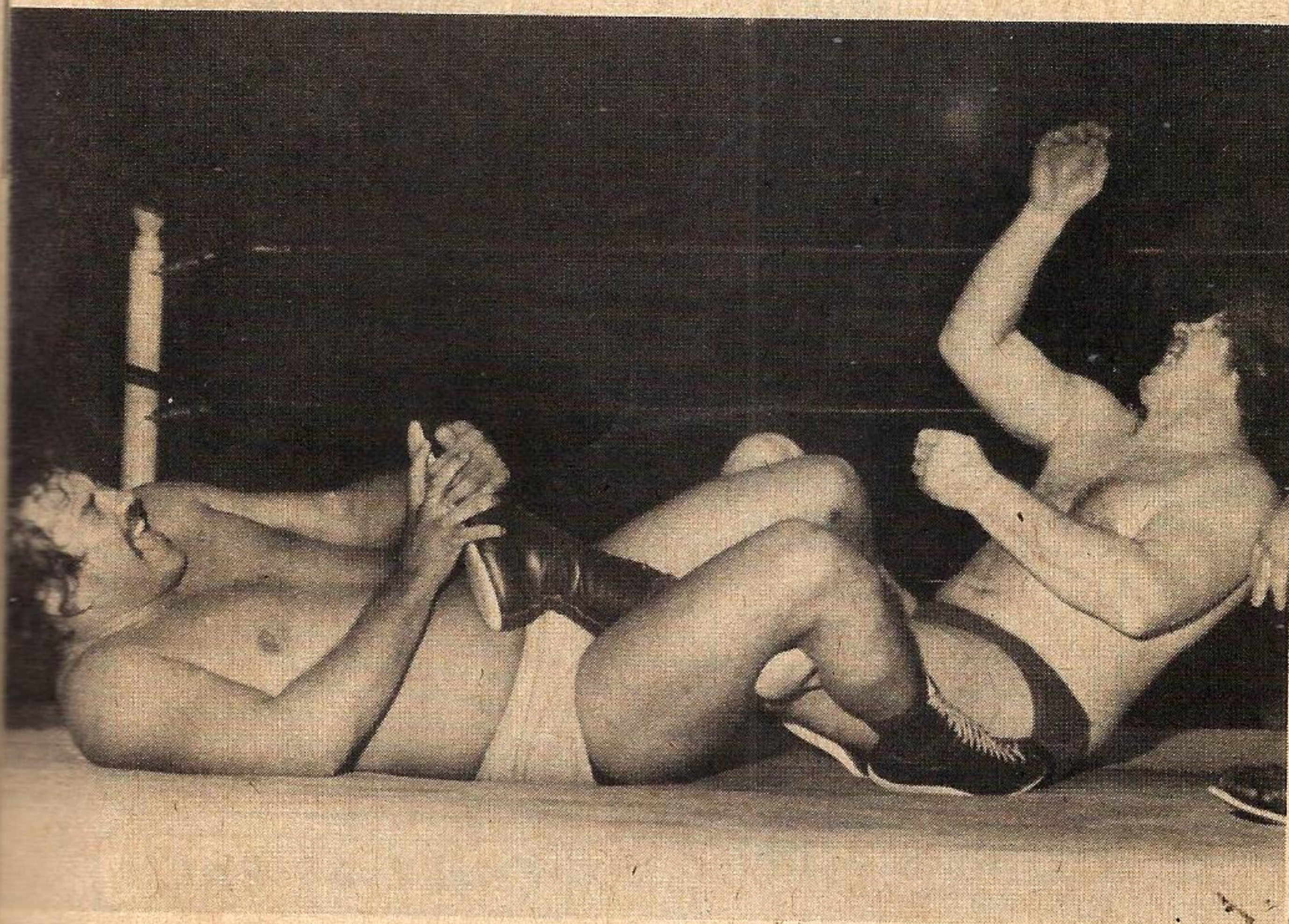
The NWA championship title was on the line in Shreveport Municipal Auditorium when champion Terry Funk was challenged by Cowboy Bill Watts.

Bill took the first fall with his Oklahoma Stampede. Fans began to sense an upset when Funk got into trouble early in the second fall. Terry found himself struggling desperately to stay in the match.

As the fans screamed for Watts, Funk did the only thing he could to save his title. With the swiftness of a cobra's strike, he threw Watts over the ropes—an immediate disqualification. Funk lost the match, but he kept his title. □

YOU ASKED US

Okay fans. You asked for it and here it is. Each month either **INSIDE WRESTLING** or **THE WRESTLER** will publish *your* column—"YOU ASKED US." Just jot down a question and the wrestler you'd like us to ask it to and send it to: You Asked Us, **THE WRESTLER**, P.O. Box 58, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571. Questions will be answered only in this column.



Jerry Brisco has Terry Funk writhing on the canvas but can't keep his victim under control long enough to win the match and Funk's NWA title. Terry has often resorted to disqualification tactics.

Q: How long has Ernie Ladd been known as "The King Of Wrestling?"—Dwight Holliday, Pamona, California

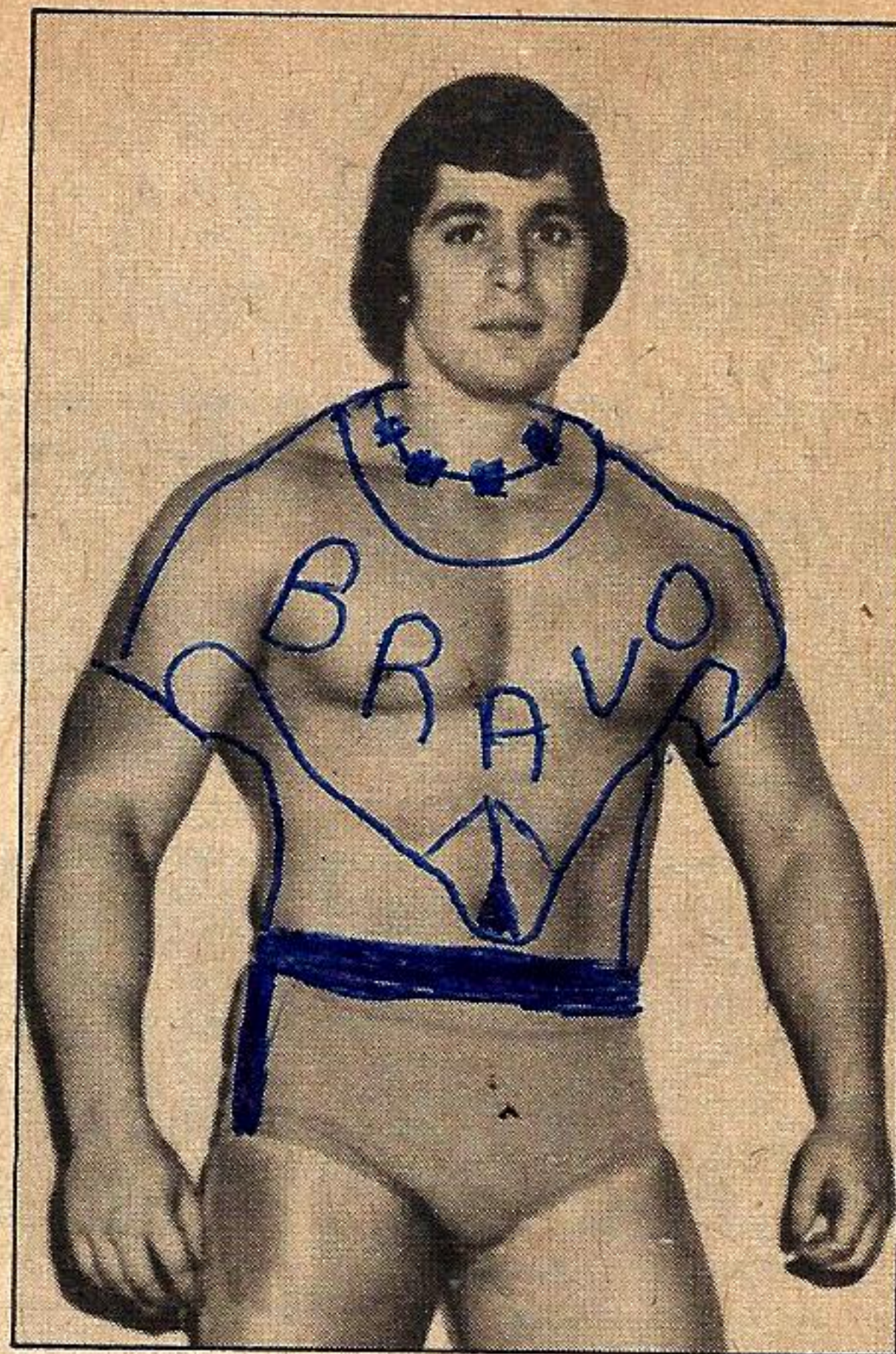
A: "Since my career began," boasts Ladd. "The day I first stepped through the ropes, everyone realized I was a king

and they were mere peons."

Q: How tall is Baba the Giant?—Bob Aucamp, Virginia Beach, Virginia

A: Baba towers at over 7-feet-tall, Bob!

Q: What ever happened to Dino Bravo and referee Tommy



It's no wonder female fans are inquiring where handsome Dino Bravo is wrestling these days. He's now in Georgia.

Young?—Sharon Stenges, New York City, New York

A: Dino is wrestling in the mid-atlantic and Georgia areas and referee Young is officiating in the mid-atlantic states.

Q: Does Chavo Guerrero speak English?—Marianne Proto, Brooklyn, New York

A: Chavo does speak some English, but he is more comfortable when conversing in his native tongue—Spanish.

Q: Is it true Pedro Morales recently teamed with his old friend Victor Rivera?—Trudy Collafin, Memphis, Tennessee

A: Yes it's true. Victor and Pedro were paired on a recent Japanese tour and won all of their tag team bouts.

Q: Has Jerry Brisco gotten a shot at Terry Funk's title?—Ralph Yeager, Amarillo, Texas

A: Jerry has wrestled Terry several times, but technical reasons have prevented him from taking the title. Terry has been disqualified during most of their matches.

Q: Are Mike and Eddie Graham going to keep trying to get the Florida tag team belts back from Bob Orton Jr. and Sr.?—Tommy Hunter, Hobe Sound, Florida

A: "As long as they have the belts, we won't give up trying to get them back," vowed Eddie.

(Continued on page 60)

PHOTOS BY BILL APTER



CAN PARISI AND CERDAN

EVEN THEIR NAME can strike terror into the hearts of their opponents. The Executioners. The vicious team tries to live up to the horror that name implies. The Executioners. Many have speculated the WWWF has never seen any tag team as brutal as this one. They are striving to reach one goal—winning the WWWF Tag Team Championship. Can Tony Parisi and Louis Cerdan keep their belts against this savage duo?

The Executioners victories have been without merit. Any illegal maneuver they could employ has been used in their quest for the title. Many

of their opponents have been left seriously injured after a match. Indeed, watching the team in action is a sickening, disgusting sight. Yet some of the best teams in the WWWF have been defeated by this brutal pair. There seems to be no way to put a stop to this team's reign of terror!

Now all eyes are turning to the tag team champions of the WWWF—Tony Parisi and Louis Cerdan. Many fans believe it is the duty of the titleholders to protect the honor of the alliance and of wrestling itself. But The Executioners have been waiting for just such a situation. They have every intention of winning a match against Parisi and Cerdan. They don't care what methods they need to win, but

As this issue was going to press, we learned The Executioners had defeated Tony Parisi and Louis Cerdan for the WWWF tag team title. Exclusive coverage of that match will appear in the next issue of THE WRESTLER.



SURVIVE THE EXECUTIONERS?

they say they will win!

A considerable amount of speculation has arisen over this vicious team. The first question everyone asks is who are they. The masked duo has so far succeeded in keeping their identities a well-guarded secret. Though countless numbers have tried, no wrestler has been able to unmask either of the two men.

All that can be guessed about the faces under those masks is limited. It has been deduced the men under those masks are famous wrestlers. But time and again it has been pointed out the identities of these men are unim-

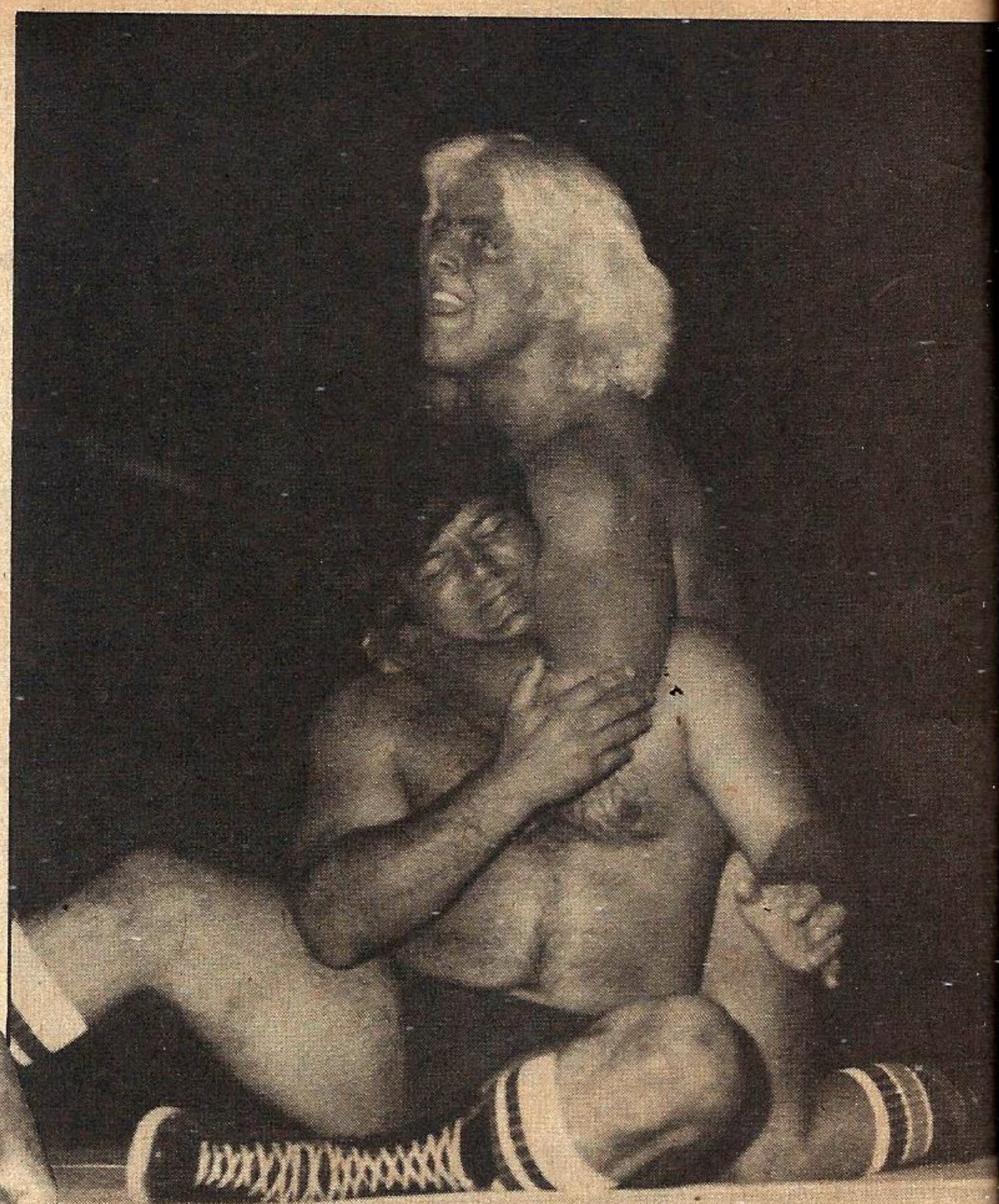
portant. It is their lack of respect for the sport of wrestling—unparalleled by any other team—which makes this pair different from any other tag team. Still, there is no doubt these men are veteran wrestlers.

So it is now up to Parisi and Cerdan to halt The Executioners' bloody massacres. But can the champions do this monumental task? Is it within the powers of Tony Parisi and Louis Cerdan, working together as a well-trained tag team, to extinguish the fire of The Executioners?

Since winning their championship, Parisi and Cerdan have impressed spectators with their remarkable skills in the mat wars. It is obvious to anyone who sees them in action this team knows how to work well together. So far they have been able to meet any challenge to their title. And they have stayed successful by sticking to strictly scientific methods.

But will their scientific skills be
(Continued on page 50)

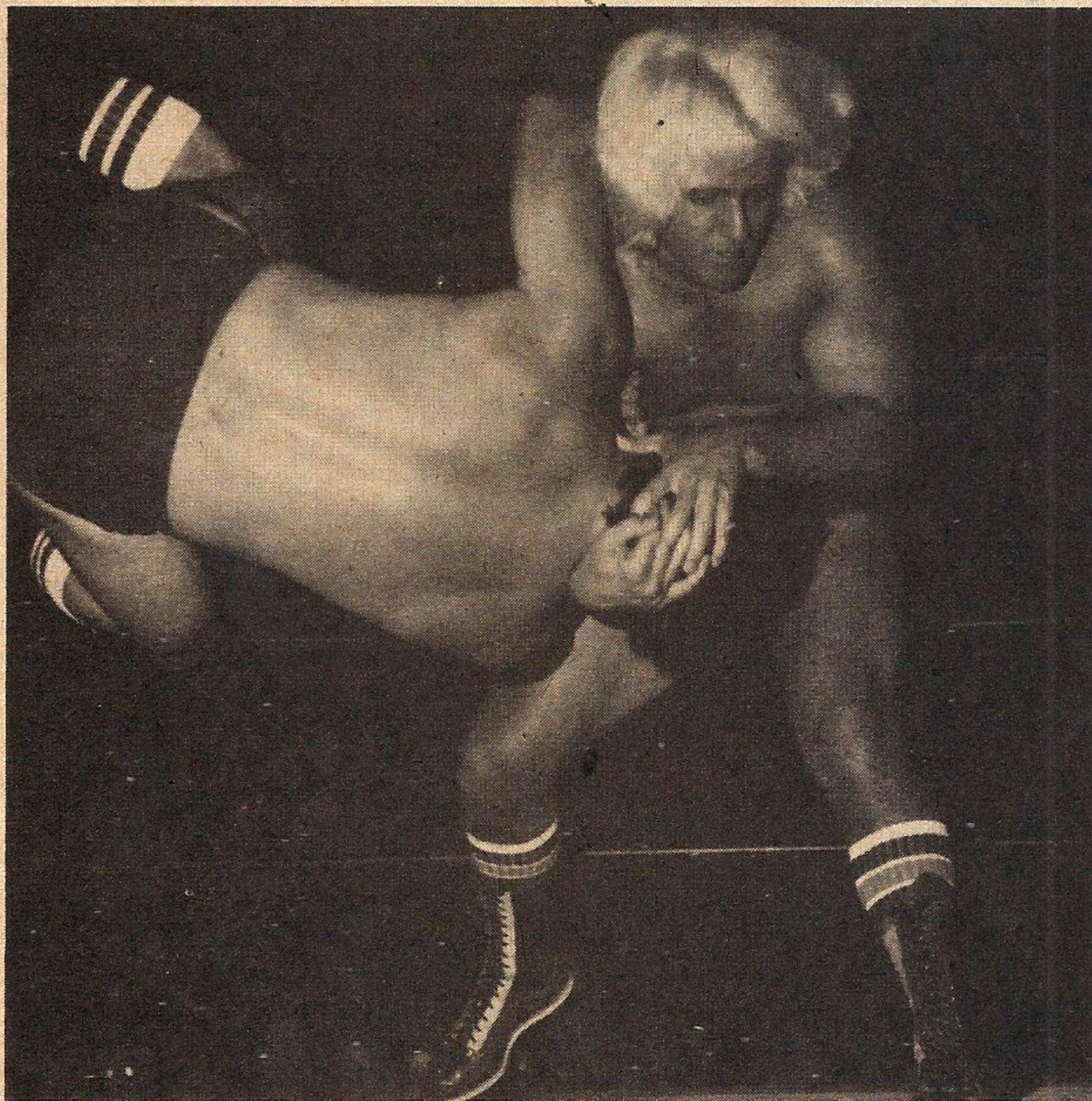
A new masked tag team is terrorizing the WWWF. Can champions Tony Parisi and Louis Cerdan defend themselves against the greatest threat they've ever faced?



Ric Flair (left) is an imposing figure as he strides into the arena wearing his mid-atlantic championship belt. He is even more impressive capturing foe Paul Jones in a barely legal headlock (above).

**The
Experts
Declare...
RIC FLAIR
CHAMPION**

Every year an elite group of wrestling experts secretly meets to discuss the future of the sport. In this year's meeting the group came to a shocking conclusion—young Ric Flair is destined to become a world champion!



Ric demonstrates his skill and power by sending Jones flying high through the air with a perfectly executed flip. It's moves like these which lead the sport's leading experts to predict a major championship for Flair before the end of the decade—or sooner!

THE YOUNG MAN struts arrogantly around the ring after defeating yet another in a long string of opponents. The thousands of fans in the arena make loud their displeasure over the young man's victory. He doesn't seem to care. If arrogance and lack of respect for the fans were the

sole judge, Ric Flair would have been world champion long ago.

However, Ric is still without a world championship belt around his waist, though not through any fault of his own. For the past year, Ric has been trying to get a shot at the championship—any championship—yet he has

failed in his efforts. Promoters just do not want to risk a present champion's title in a match against an unpredictable like Ric Flair.

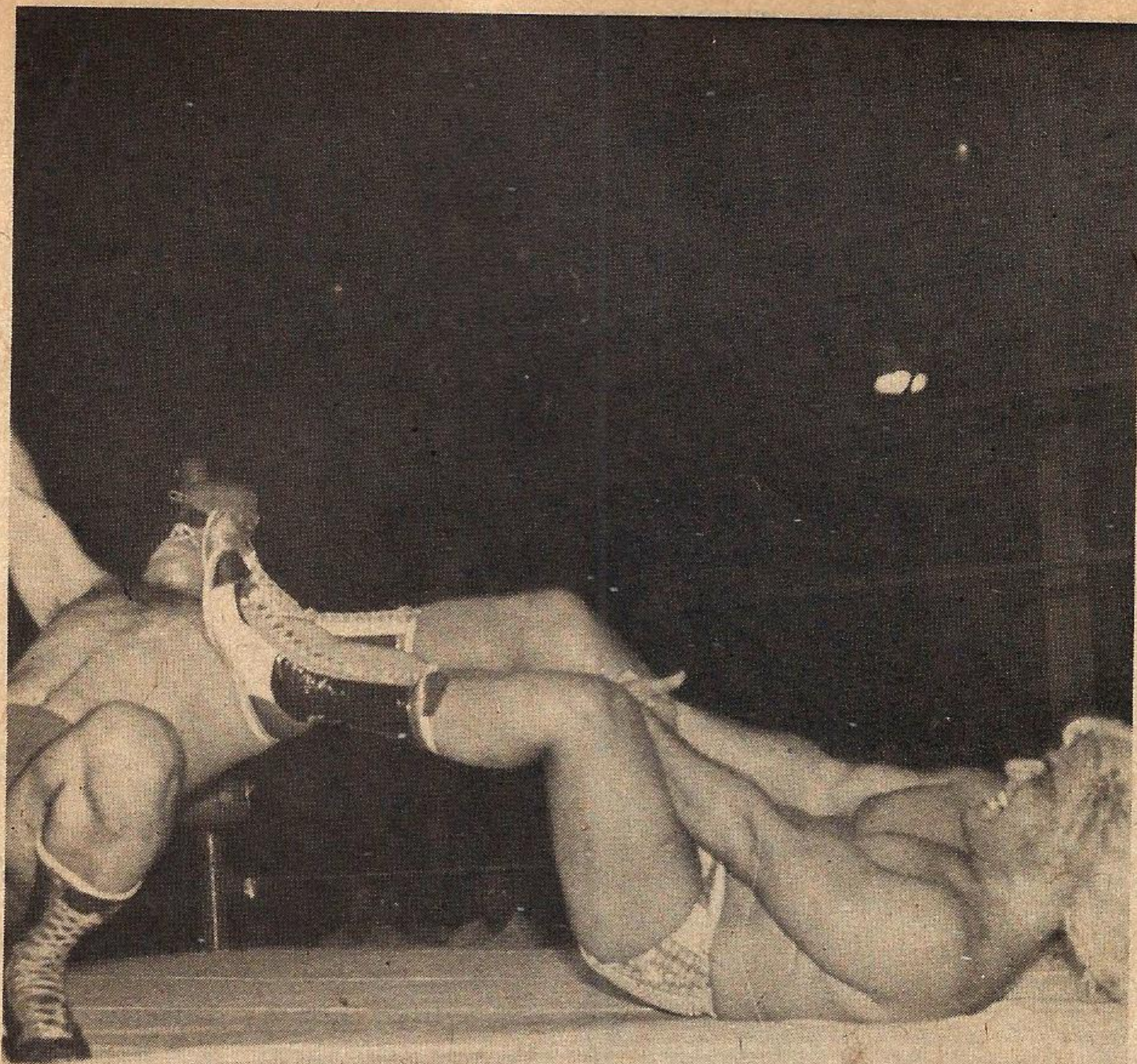
Flair's efforts have not gone completely unnoticed. Certain select wrestling experts—men who are careful observers of every event happening in the mat wars—have taken note of Ric Flair.

These men periodically meet to discuss new developments in wrestling. In one of their recent meetings the discussion centered around the topic of Ric Flair. Many of the men had heard of Flair, though they had never actually seen him wrestle. Those who had witnessed Ric in person testified as to the potentials of the young man. Out of these discussions, a committee was formed to study—secretly—Ric Flair and assess his position in the wrestling world.

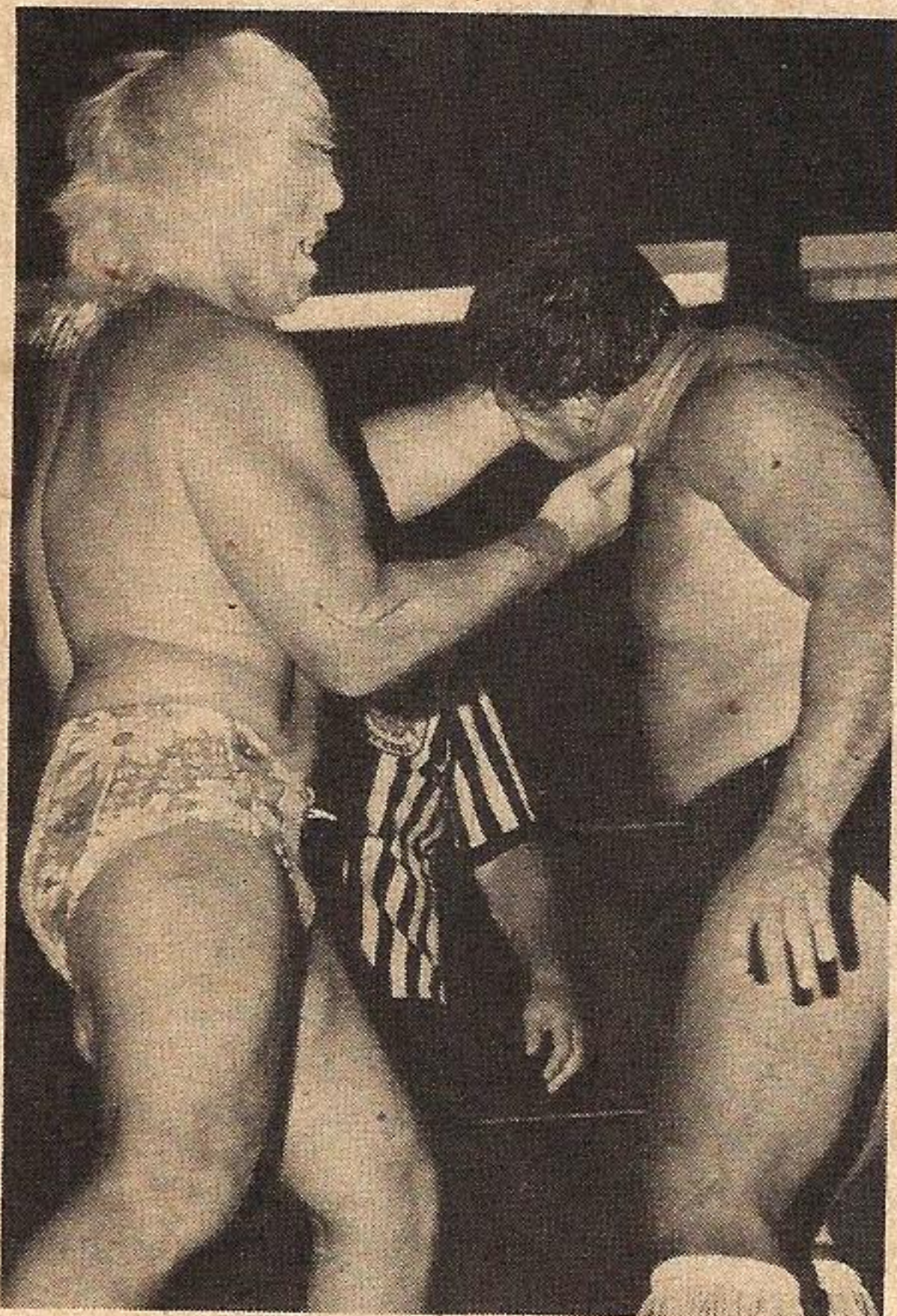
Four men were selected to be on this elite group. For the next few months the committee studied reports, films, and eyewitness accounts of Ric Flair. In addition to this research, the group traveled to several arenas around the country to see the wrestler in action. After three month's time, the four men sat down and wrote their report—a secret document to be seen only by the elite group of experts.

In the past, this group of experts accurately predicted a number of important events in the wrestling world. For example, in their 1974 annual report the experts said there would be at least two changes of world championship belts within two year's time. By the end of 1975, both Verne Gagne and Jack Brisco had lost their titles. No one else had even considered

**R IS THE NEXT
N OF THE WORLD!**



Above: With ruthless efficiency, Flair tortures Paul Jones' arm late in the match. Note the gleeful look on Flair's face as he makes Jones writhe in agony. Below: Ric sends his fist hard into the throat of Chief Wahoo McDaniel. It's only one of the many ways Ric can make any veteran grappler double over in agony!



the possibility of these events happening. The experts were proven correct.

Therefore, a report written by these experts cannot be taken lightly. There are many precedents for believing what they have to say.

And what the report says is that Ric Flair will become the next world champion!

The report was supposed to remain a secret document, to be seen only by members of the select group of experts. However, a copy of this top secret document was leaked to this magazine's Associate Editor, Michael B. Kape. It was agreed in return to keep the name of the source a secret.

The report—both vague and definite at the same time—makes very clear how the committee feels. Ric Flair, according to the document, will be the next champion. That is definite. But the report does not say of which alliance—WWWF, AWA, or NWA—it is Ric will hold the title. That is the vague part. There is also a condition attached to their predictions.

In part, the report states: "Ric Flair is a young man who has shown a great potential, though it has generally been misguided. His excellence in the mat wars has been remarkable, yet it is unfortunate he chooses to be a rule-breaker instead of a strictly scientific wrestler.

"If comparison must be made, Ric Flair could best be compared to the immortal Buddy Rogers, as Flair has stated himself many times. However, we find it will be some time yet before

the young man can even think of equaling Rogers' fame or abilities.

"This is not a claim to be taken lightly. No one in recent years has been as exciting to watch as Rogers. This is generally agreed. However, Ric Flair, if correctly guided, has the potential to be as great.

"But this brings us to the one point about the wrestler we cannot overlook: Flair's history of breaking rules instead of abiding by them. Although he has proven to us over and over again he is a talented young man, he somehow finds it necessary to remain a rulebreaker. We cannot condone this. Yet the entire committee feels if Flair takes the option of becoming a strictly scientific wrestler, there is no limit to where his talents could take him.

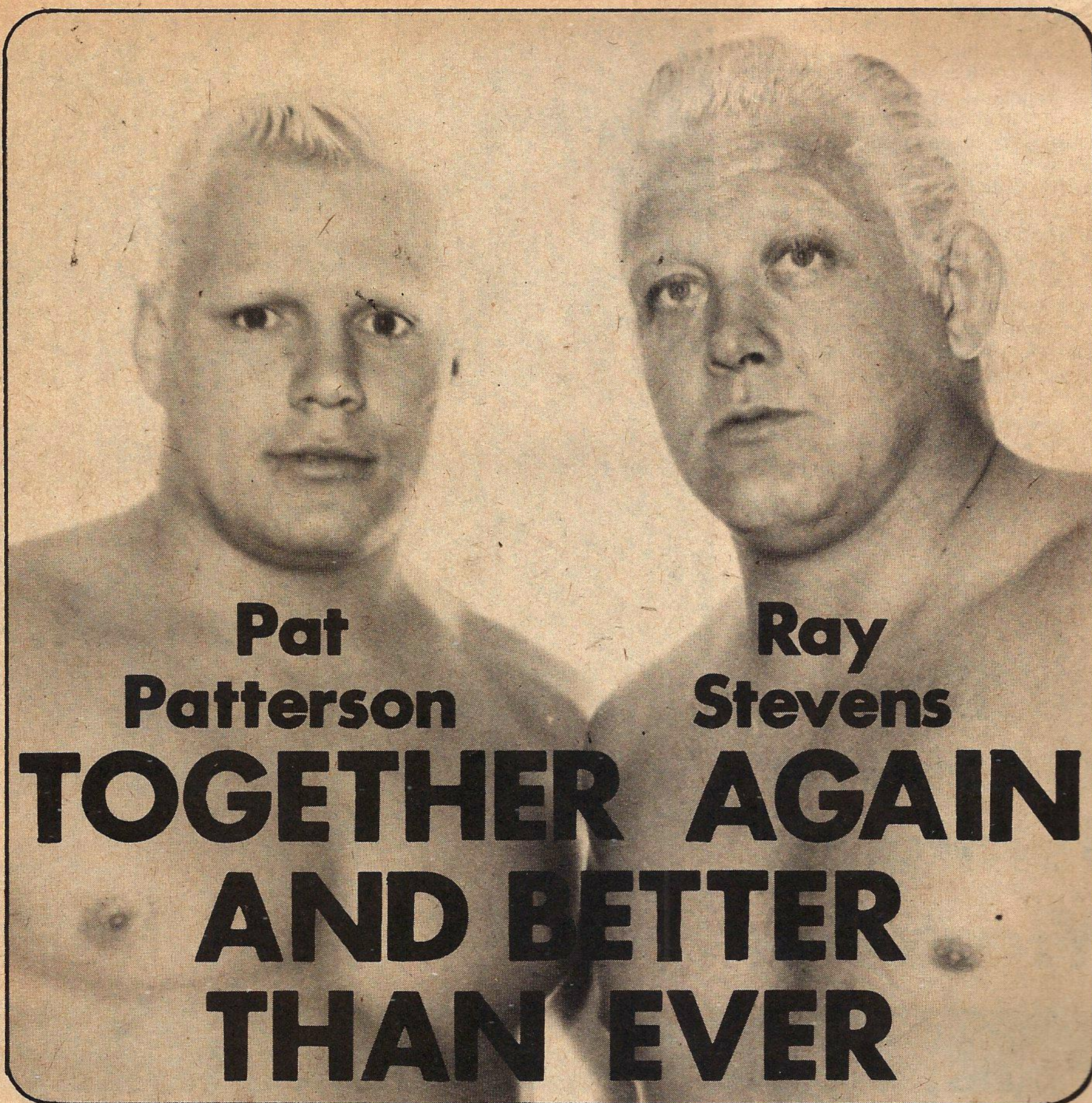
"Therefore, our judgement of Flair is conditional; if he changes his ways, he will become a champion. If he retains his present use of less-than-legal maneuvers, we can not make predictions."

At this point, the report details many occasions when Flair has proven his ability to wrestle scientifically, and what these instances mean in relation to the group's conclusions. However, the report then takes a sudden shift of attitude, addressing itself to the question of which alliance Flair could capture a title:

"During his short career," the report says, "Ric Flair has been featured in two major alliances—the AWA and the NWA. In recent months, he has ventured into the WWWF. His showings there have been impressive. It is obvious to us he will be back there again. Although his appearances in the northeast have been limited to preliminary matches, in due time he will be featured in main events.

There is already discussion of giving Ric Flair a shot at the NWA title presently held by Terry Funk. In addition, many fans in the AWA who remember his professional debut in that area believe he could easily defeat the present champion, Nick Bockwinkel. And if his efforts in the WWWF are successful, in very little time fans in that alliance will be demanding a title shot for Ric Flair.

"But no matter which alliance finally gives Flair a title shot, his prospects of winning are conditional. We feel Ric Flair must soon change his ways. Then, and only then, can we accurately predict his eventual championship. And when Ric Flair becomes a strictly scientific wrestler, nothing will be able to stand in his way!" □



**Pat
Patterson**

**Ray
Stevens**

TOGETHER AGAIN AND BETTER THAN EVER

PHOTOS BY LARRY BARNHIZER

Years ago, this tag team terrorized California wrestling. Today, Pat Patterson and Ray Stevens want to be known as the tag team Californians consider the most popular in the world!

THE SEAGULLS FLEW luxuriously over Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco. Watching them glide and swoop was Ray Stevens. He couldn't help thinking the birds were putting on a show to welcome him home.

At one time San Francisco was Stevens' town. He was the most famous—and despised—wrestler in the city's history. A lot had happened since Stevens had been the

town's number one public enemy. Even more time had elapsed since he had dominated tag team wrestling with Pat Patterson as his partner.

As Stevens walked along the wharf, taking in the arena of the salt air, he reflected on the past and the future. No longer is he hated by California's wrestling fans. He was teaming again with Pat Patterson, who had struggled years to gain the

fan's forgiveness. Stevens would now be accepted as a man who would battle those hated by the crowd.

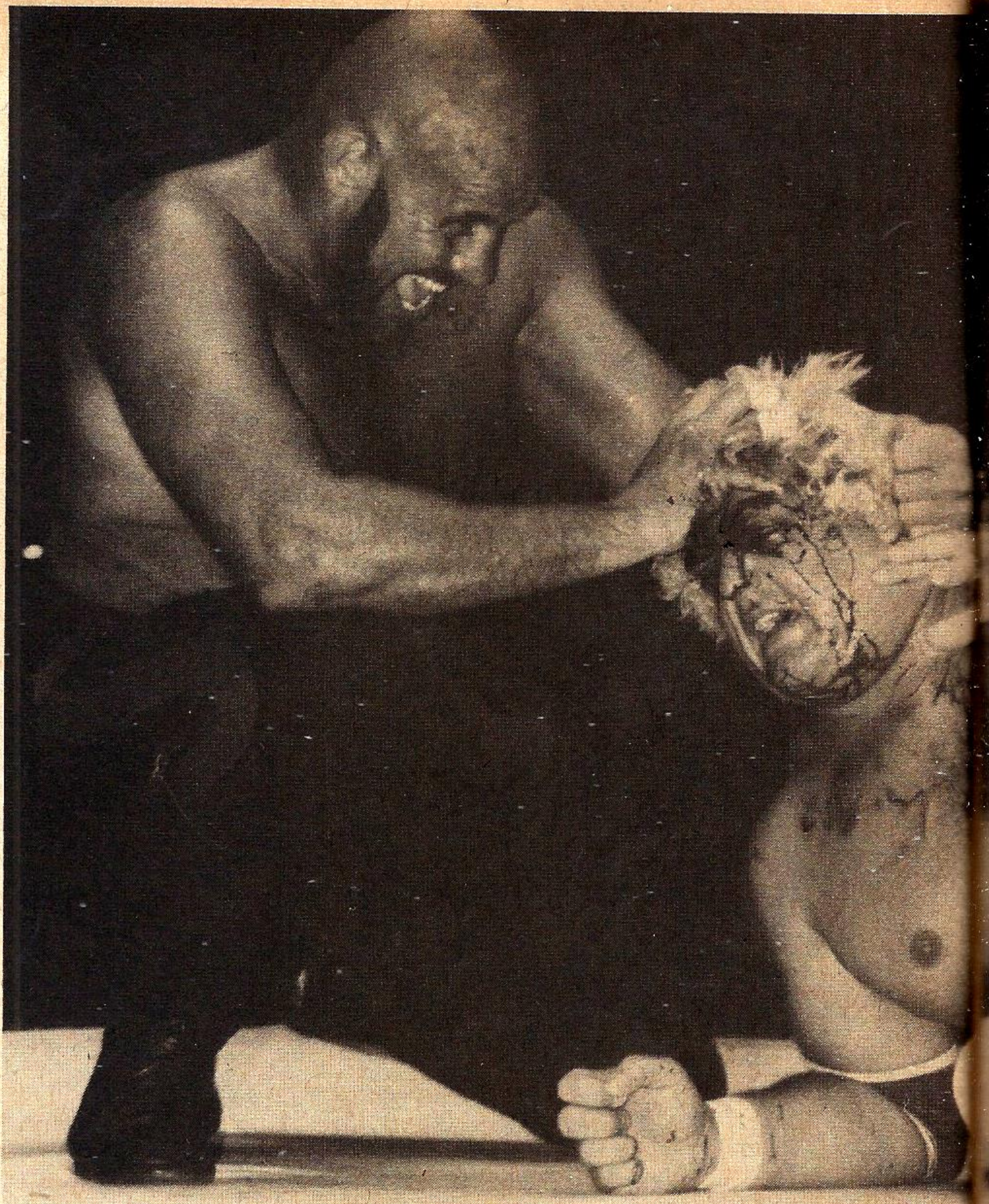
Ray remembered the booing he used to receive, the threats on his home and life. No athlete in recent memory has received such hatred—and it was all earned. Ray smiled ruefully at the images of bleeding and broken opponents flooding his

(Continued on page 54)

TODAY, NO WRESTLER commands more love and devotion than Dusty Rhodes. He's worshiped by thousands of fans all over the world. His slogan, "I'm the American Dream," has been taken as a rallying cry by the legions who wish to see him world champion.

Yet, amidst the adulation lies a seed of doubt and worry. No fan can ever really forget the notorious years when Rhodes was one of the most villainous men in the sport. His list of maimings andcrippings is long and ugly. Though he's become a fan favorite in recent years, there was a time when he spit upon those who now cheer him. Some can never forgive his vile insults.

The wrestlers who once felt Dusty's wrath can never fully trust Rhodes, no matter what he says or does. They are reminded of his notorious past by the scars still remaining all over their bodies. That Dusty Rhodes is a changed man is too much for them to



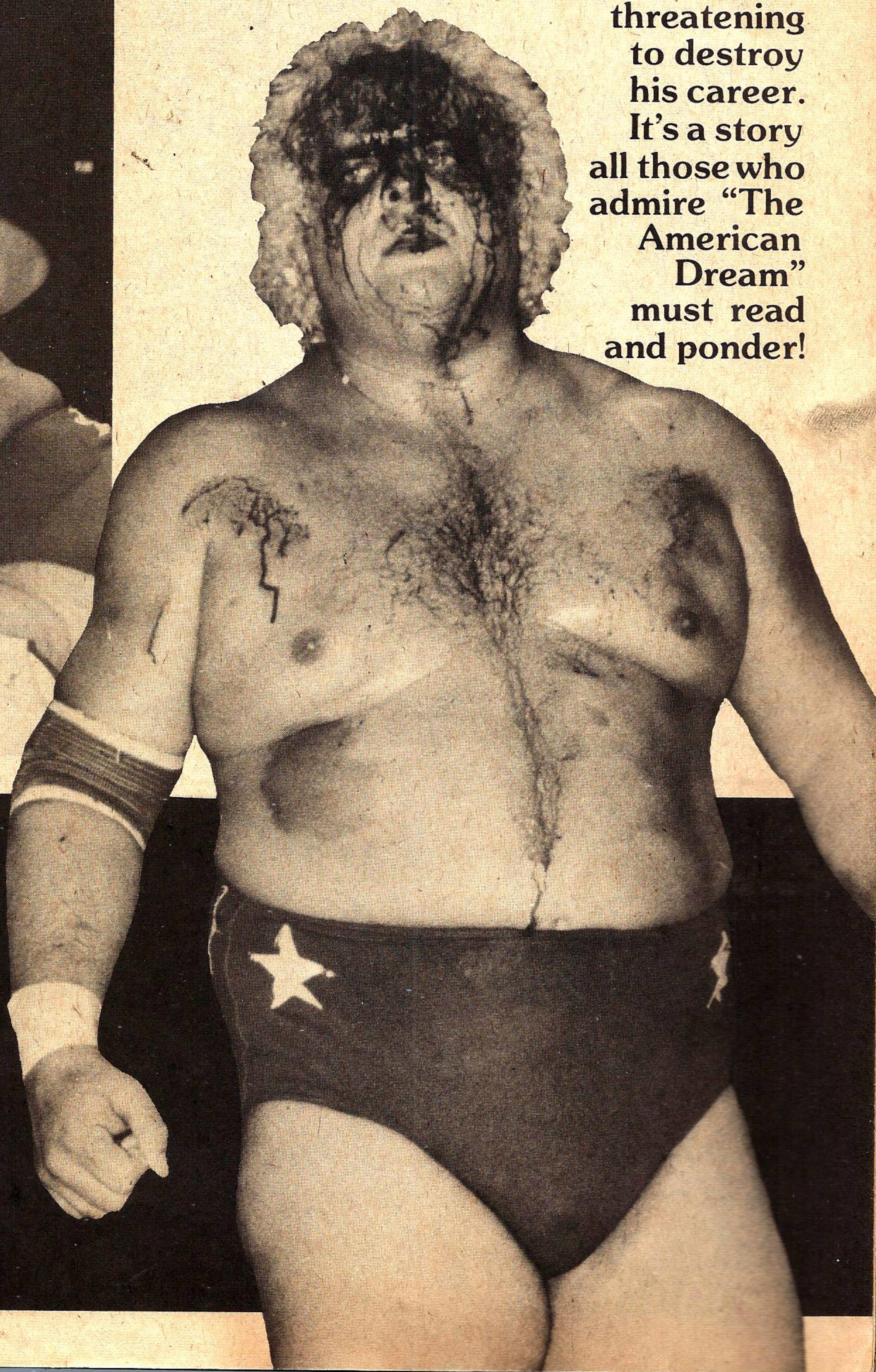
The Question Terrifying Wrestling:

WILL DUSTY RHO BECOME A “BAD GUY” AGA

Dusty Rhodes suffers the agony of Killer Krupp's clawhold. How much longer will Dusty absorb this pain to please his fans?

This is Dusty Rhodes' first printed defense of rumors threatening to destroy his career. It's a story all those who admire "The American Dream" must read and ponder!

DES
IN?



believe.

There remain many people who wonder how long Rhodes will remain a fan favorite. They see his tactics haven't changed appreciably since his savage days; only his opponents have changed. It would take very little effort for Dusty to return to his old ways.

Many of Dusty's fans will ignore any thought of him reverting to his hell-raising days. But those with long memories—those who have been betrayed by other wrestlers—can't shake this all-consuming fear. And the fear seems to be spreading.

The ones fearing Dusty the most are explaining to the others why Dusty can't be trusted. Some are met with anger, some with derision, but still others have found sympathetic audiences. Lately when Dusty has been wrestling, there has been a barely perceptible undercurrent of suspicion. Rhodes realizes he must end this suspicion or else he will succumb to it.

Therefore, Dusty requested we print an interview with him. He talked for more than three hours, something not all that unusual for Dusty. However for much of the time he was deadly serious, very unusual for Rhodes. The evangelist in Dusty, the need to lead a movement, demanded he take this as a life-or-death matter.

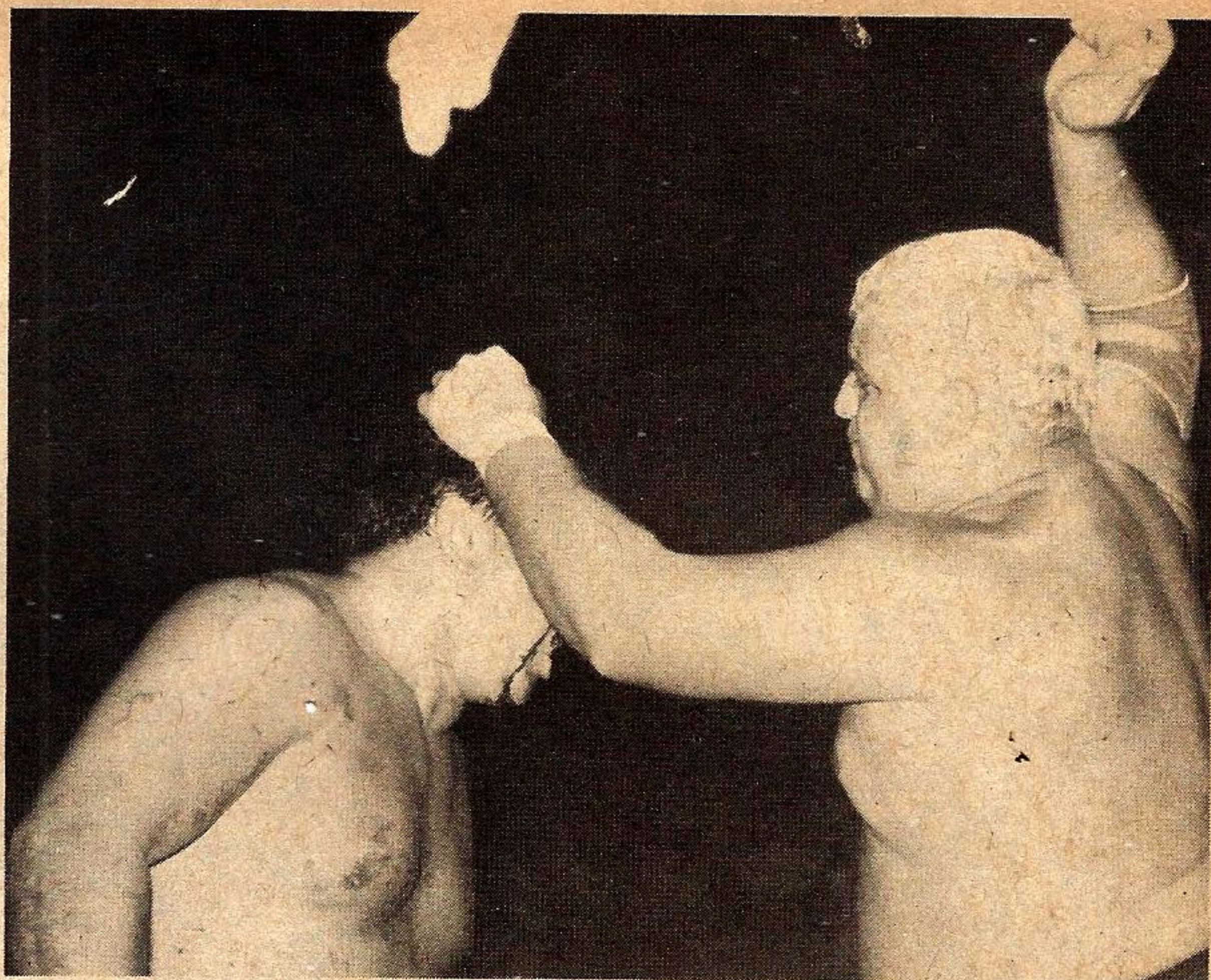
At first, Dusty made the usual pronouncements for which he's famous. "I'm the American Dream," "The people's champion," "One title for my friends," peppered his conversation. He needed the familiar phrases to reassure him. He would soon be saying things never revealed publicly before.

"I've heard the rumors," Dusty declared in his familiar chant, "the lies, the slanders, and the stupidities. People say I won't always represent my fans; that I'm not trying to win the title for them. They say I'll betray my new friends like I betrayed my despised 'friends' many years ago.

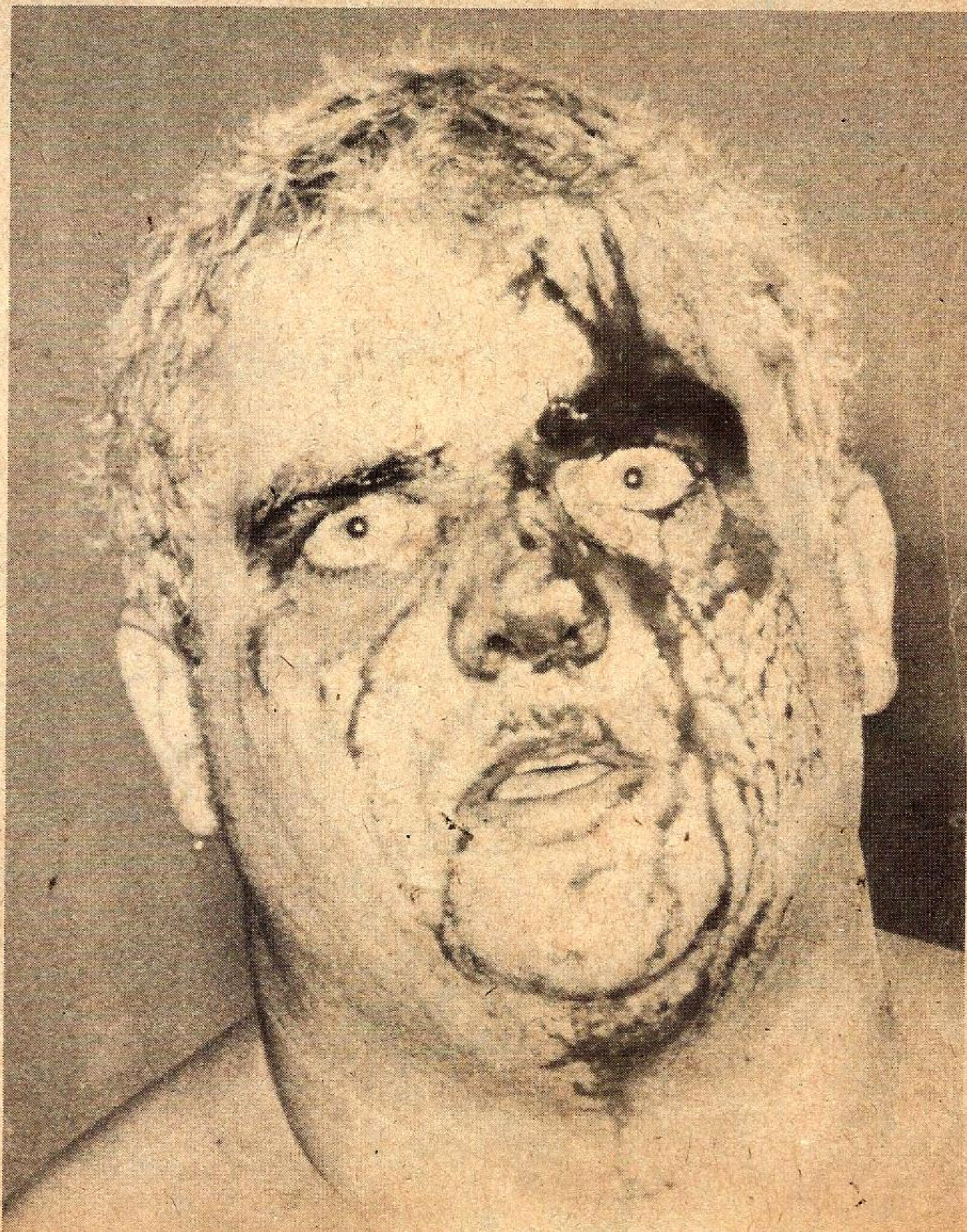
"First of all, those men deserved to be betrayed—and every fan agrees with me. They were bad people, cheaters and worse; they were men who insulted the sport and hated the fans. I was young, ambitious, and wrong. I thought those guys, the rule-breakers, would show me a shortcut to the title. All they did was make me embarrassed to be a wrestler.

"I looked at myself in the mirror one day and said, 'Dusty, what happened to the pride you once had, the love of people you wanted? What happened? Wasn't it a long way down? Wasn't it a strange way down? You've got to start

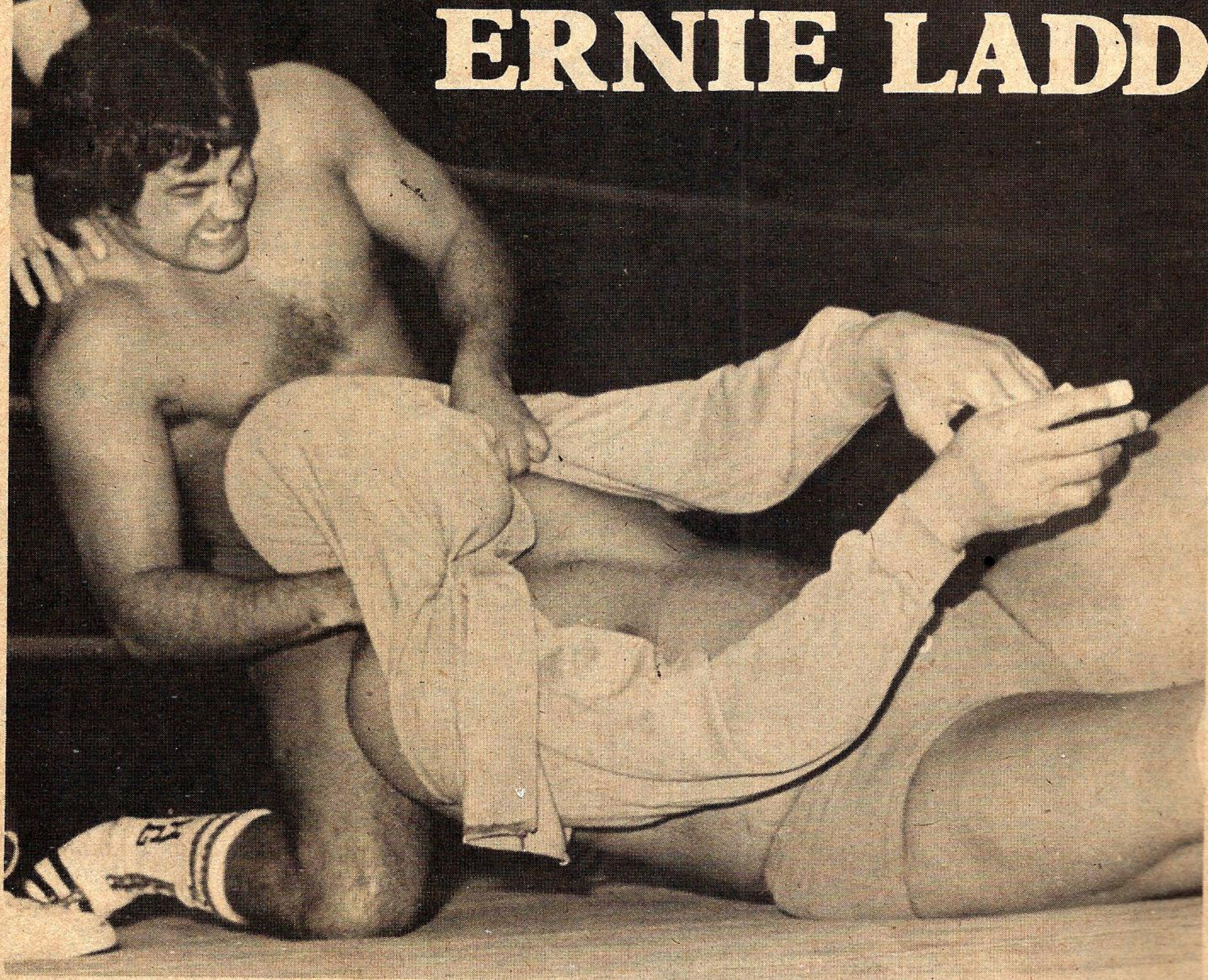
(Continued on page 56)



In the past, Dusty Rhodes was known for breaking rules and using illegal tactics, like he does here against Wahoo McDaniel (above). Even then, however, Dusty was often bloodied (below) after a bout.



CHAVO BLINDS ERNIE LADD



AND GETS HIS SWEET REVENGE

Ernie Ladd was confident he had broken rookie Chavo Guerrero's spirit. Chavo proved he's here to stay—and Ernie Ladd has a dangerous new enemy!

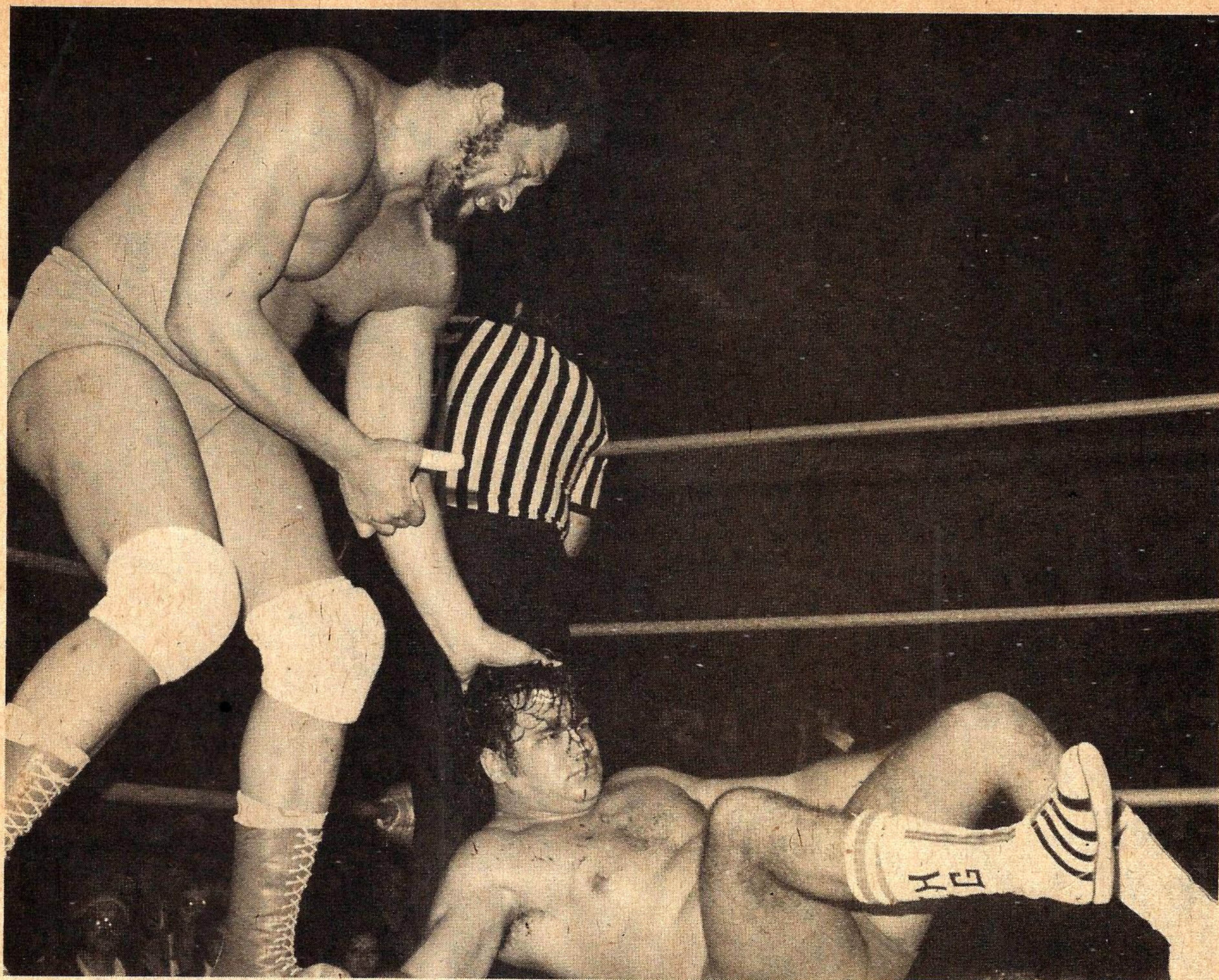
CHAVO GUERRERO SAT dejectedly in his dressing room, his usually high spirits having sunk to a new low. He had just been handed his first major technical defeat. He had lost to the self-proclaimed King of

Wrestling, Ernie Ladd.

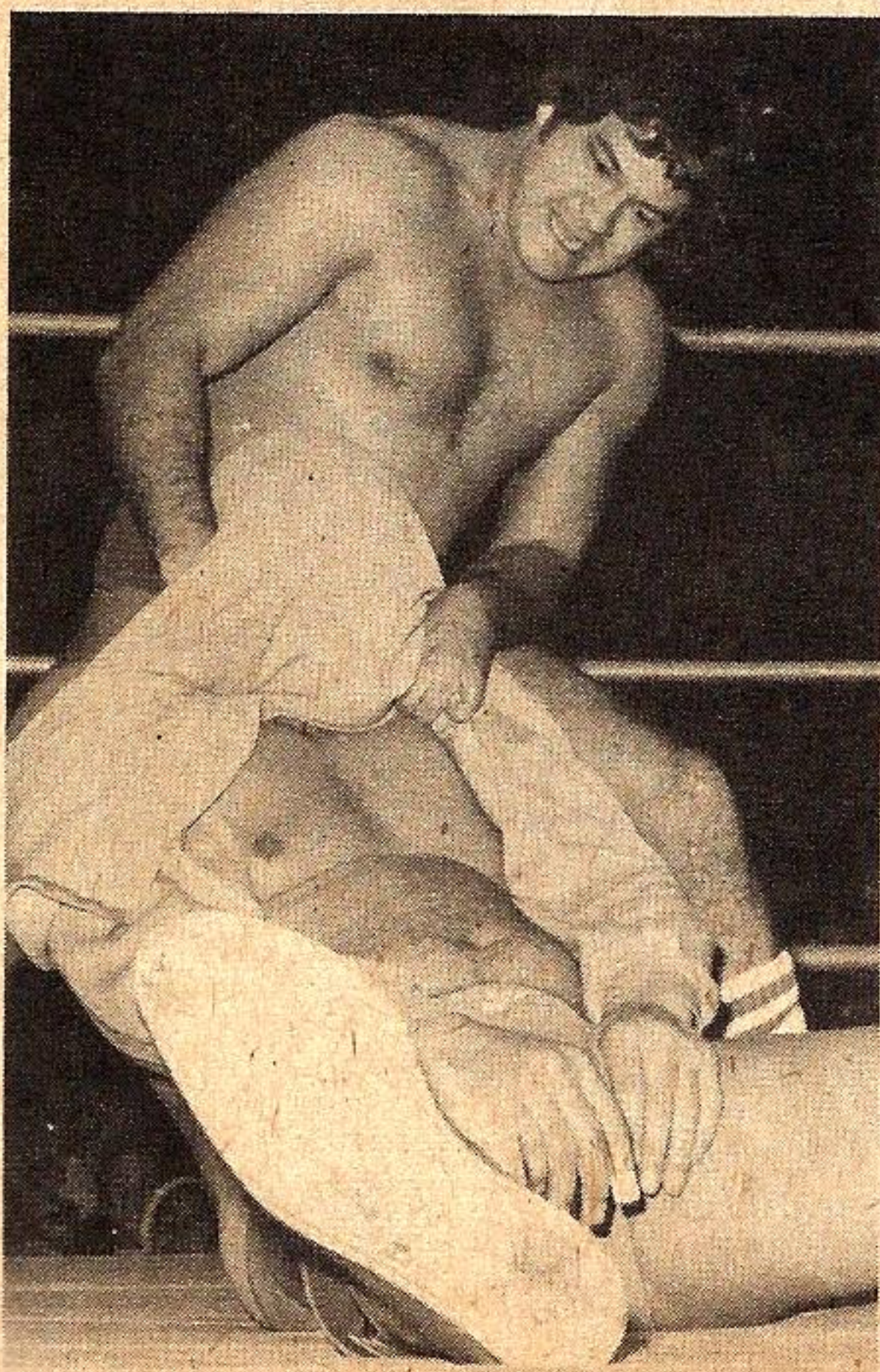
The young man was surrounded by a faithful band of followers who tried to raise the wrestler's humor. But Chavo seemed to be ignoring the words they were saying. He was

thinking only one thought. It was an ugly, vicious idea, not worthy of the young man who had prided himself on his lofty ideals: Chavo Guerrero wanted revenge.

Gory Guerrero, Chavo's father and



For the savage beating he was made to suffer in their first match (above), Chavo wreaks a painful revenge on his wily tormentor, Ernie Ladd (below).



advisor, was quite worried about the manner in which his son was facing defeat. The fragile world Chavo had built up about himself—that he could not be defeated—had crumbled around his feet. Gory could understand his son's psychological agony. Yet there was nothing the elder Guerrero could do for his son. Coming to grips with the anguish connected with defeat is something each man has to do by himself. No amount of sage wisdom could lessen the stunning blow. Gory's words were of little consolation to Chavo.

Revenge. That seemed to be the only comfort young Chavo could find. He would seek revenge against the man who had so humiliated him. He would battle Ernie Ladd again. And he would do everything in his power to win—no matter what the cost to his personal pride or reputation.

Meanwhile in Ladd's dressing room, Ernie was jubilant over his victory. "I guess I showed that little twerp something about wrestling," said Ladd. "I don't think we'll be hearing from him again, for a long time. To think he

thought he could take on the likes of Ernie Ladd . . . it's really funny!"

The next day, Chavo and his father met with a prominent Los Angeles promoter. Chavo made very clear to the man what he wanted: a rematch against Ernie Ladd. The promoter was polite to the young man, but expressed his doubts about whether Ladd would want another match against Guerrero. However, he pledged he would see what he could do about arranging the bout.

When the promoter approached Ernie and told him of the idea for a rematch against Guerrero, Ladd broke out into hysterics. He told the promoter, "That has to be one of the funniest things I've heard in a long time, daddy. Doesn't that kid know when to give up and go home? Sure, I'll go against him again. This time, I hope he learns his lesson!"

Chavo was thrilled when he heard Ladd had accepted the rematch. He immediately went into intensive training, with Gory Guerrero serving as Chavo's guiding spirit. The rookie spent many hours working out in the

gymnasium under his father's tutelage.

But in addition to Guerrero's scientific training, he was learning something else. When his father was not present, he was inventing some less than legal maneuvers he could use on Ernie Ladd, just in case of an ambush.

Gory discovered Chavo's secret training sessions by accident. When he asked his son about the use of illegal moves, Chavo admitted he was considering it. He pledged to his father he would only employ their use if he had to.

Chavo continued in his relentless training with his father by day, and his invention of less-than-scientific moves by night. When it came time for the match, the young man felt he was ready to take on the King of Wrestling.

This time, he vowed to himself, he would win.

Meanwhile, Ernie Ladd was not too worried about the contest soon to take place. He figured the rematch would just be a repeat of what had happened the first time. As far as Ernie was concerned, Chavo Guerrero posed no real threat. He knew nothing of Chavo's secret training. Ernie would soon regret his casual attitude toward the match.

Emotions ran high on the night of the match. Fans of both wrestlers turned out to see this very controversial rematch. No one was willing to speculate on who the winner would be.

In the young Mexican rookie's dressing room, Gory Guerrero was lecturing his son about his conduct in

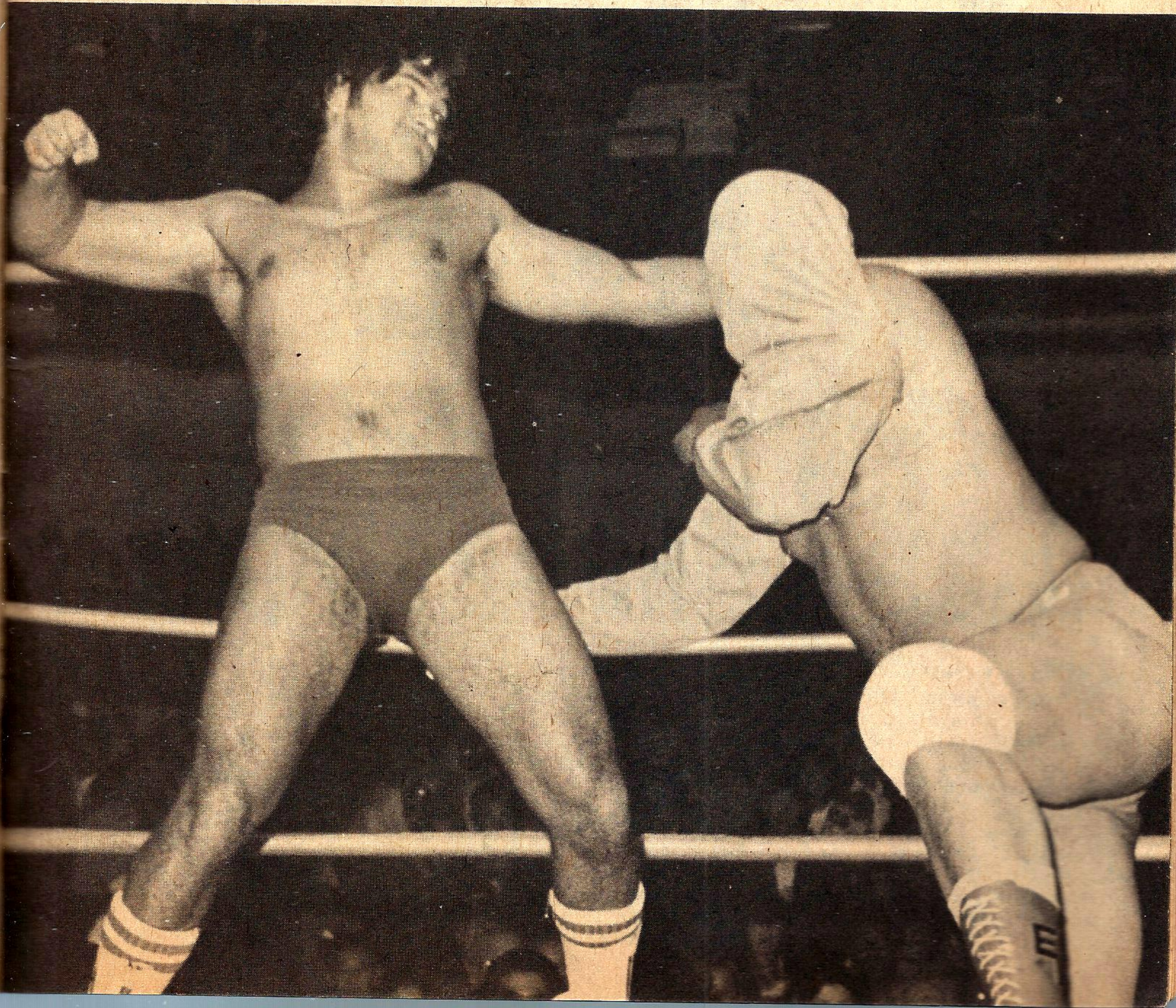
the impending match. "Please, Chavo," said Gory, "do not use any of those techniques you learned. You don't need them. You can win with your skills alone. You are a great young wrestler. Don't lower yourself to the level of an animal. When all is said and done, you will only have your pride and dignity left. If you lose that, son, you have nothing."

But Chavo did not listen intently to what his father was saying. All Chavo wanted was revenge.

Ernie Ladd spent the minutes before the match relaxing and talking with friends. He seemed to be very calm and unworried by the challenge that lay before him.

Guerrero, followed closely by his
(Continued on page 58)

Blinded in the folds of his own jacket, Ladd is helpless against the raging onslaught of Chavo Guerrero. Through his pain, Ernie realizes he has a young and dangerous enemy with whom to contend.



PHOTOS BY JIM CALDWELL

"THEY'RE LYNCHING JOSE LOTHARIO!"

NO ONE LOOKS at a hangman's noose without involuntarily shivering. A hanged man can die two ways, both horrible: he can either have his neck snapped immediately or he can dangle for minutes, slowly strangling.

The noose is also the symbol of a lynching, the most ruthless form of mob savagery. Most of the time, innocent men have died for a crazed crowd's bloodlust. Lynchings are an obscenity in the history of man.

It is no coincidence the horror of lynchings appeals to Mongolian Stomper and Jim Dillon. They have always chosen torture over justice. That's the way they think. That's why they're so hated.

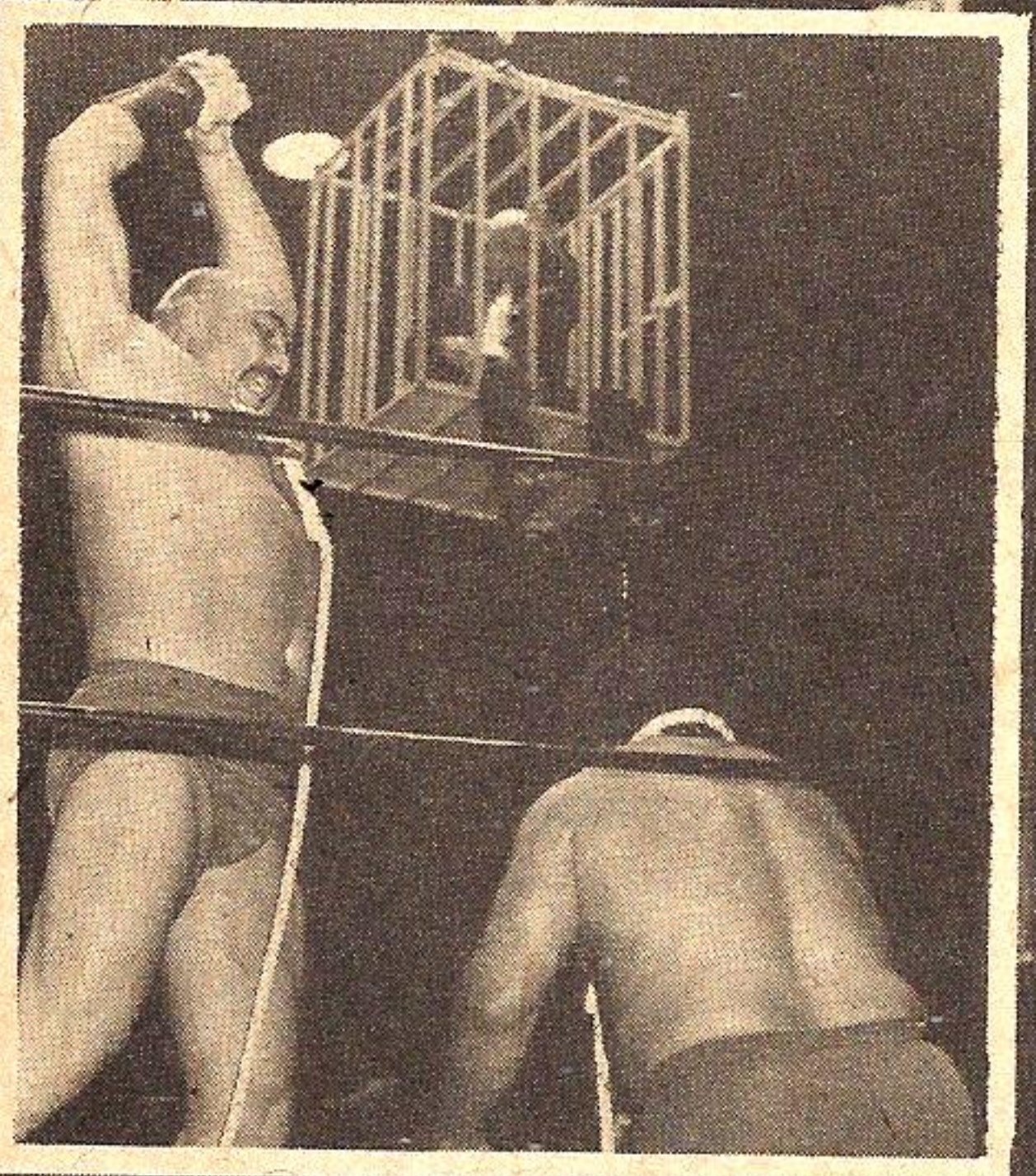
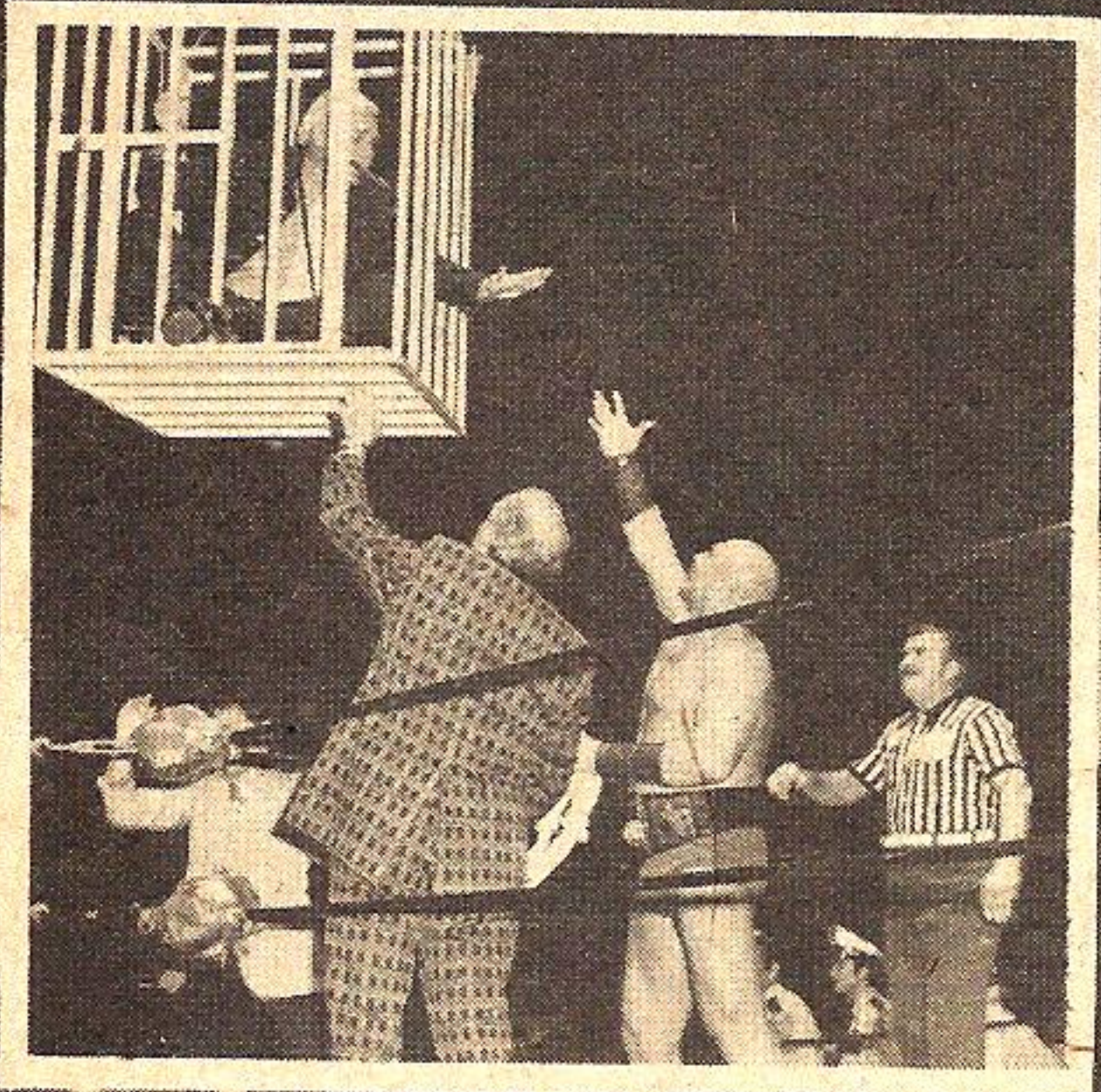
No one knows whether it was Dillon or Stomper who thought up the idea of a lynch match. It's a disgusting idea either man is capable of conceiving. Both must have been delighted when they realized their victim would be Jose Lothario.

As Dillon explained to the promoter, a lynch match has the men connected by a rope. At each end of the rope is a noose, which is slipped around the wrestlers' necks. If a man isn't choked to death first, to win he must drag the other around the ring. The rope can be used as a weapon. Made of coarse hemp, it can be used to burn a man's flesh.

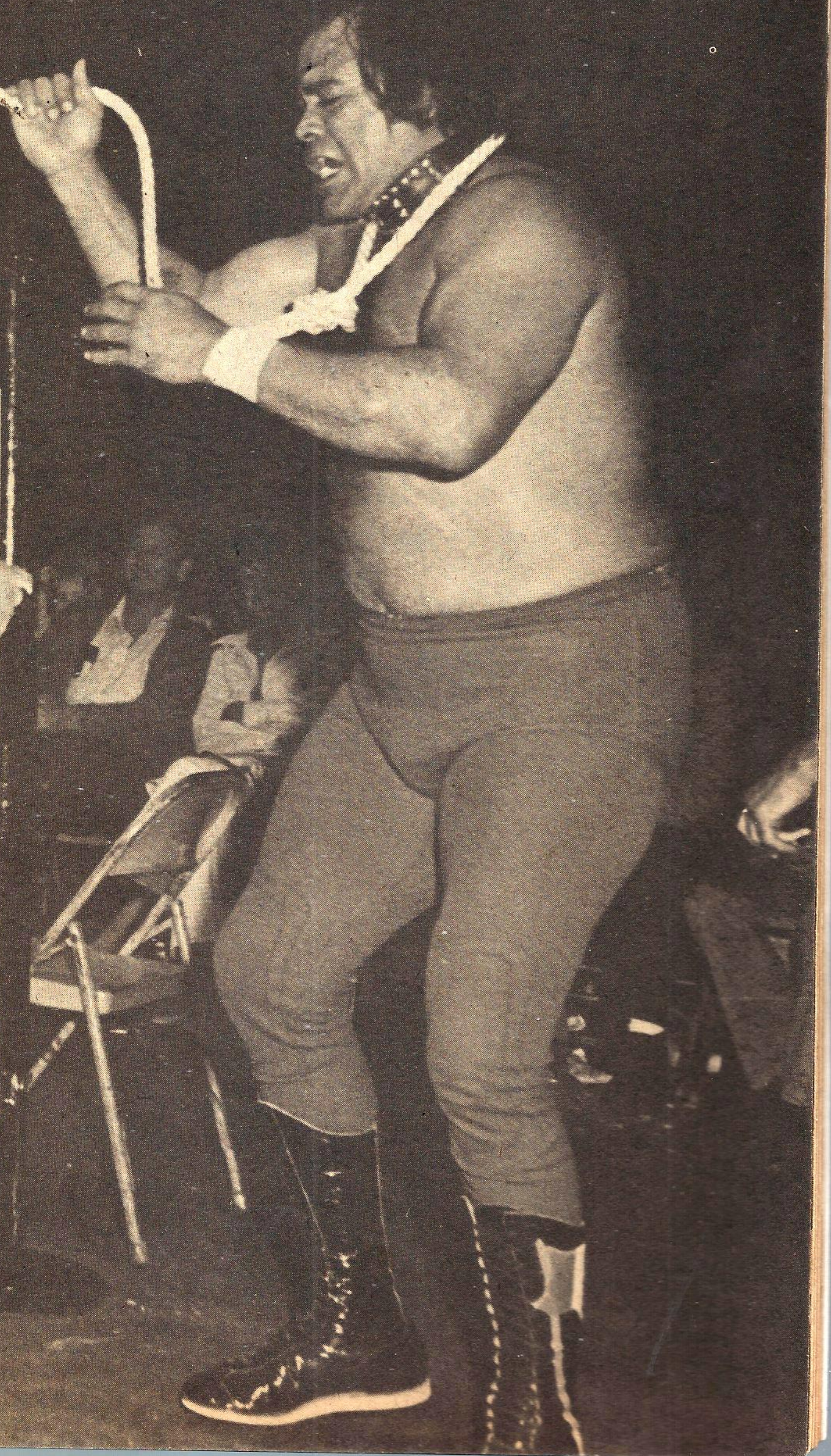
Dillon's eyes shone with delight as he described the match. The promoter,

(Continued on page 62)

Only the warped minds of Mongolian Stomper and Jim Dillon could conceive of a "Lynch Match." Only Jose Lothario could bring honor to such a despicable confrontation



Jim Dillon is hoisted in his cage (top) but that doesn't stop Stomper from pounding at Jose Lothario (above), tossing him from the ring. He almost hangs him by the throat until dead (right)! Is this sport?



EXCLUSIVE PHOTOS BY BILL APTER

Here is the exclusive story of Bruno Sammartino's injury—how it happened, how serious it is, and what are its consequences—in Bruno's own words, written while he was still in the hospital!

"THE DOCTORS TOLD ME I'D NEVER WRESTLE AGAIN!"

BY BRUNO
SAMMARTINO

THE IMMEDIATE DIAGNOSIS was that the sixth vertebrae was cracked; it was fractured.

I sustained the injury in a match against Stan Hansen in Madison Square Garden. He threw me to the ropes and hit me with the "Lariat" [a brutal maneuver in which Hansen slams his padded elbow into the neck of his reeling opponent. Ed.]. There was no question in my mind there was something in that elbowpad. When I felt the damage in the back, it was overshadowed by an ugly snap in my neck. The pain was in my neck; I knew I had some kind of serious injury. Even with the pain,

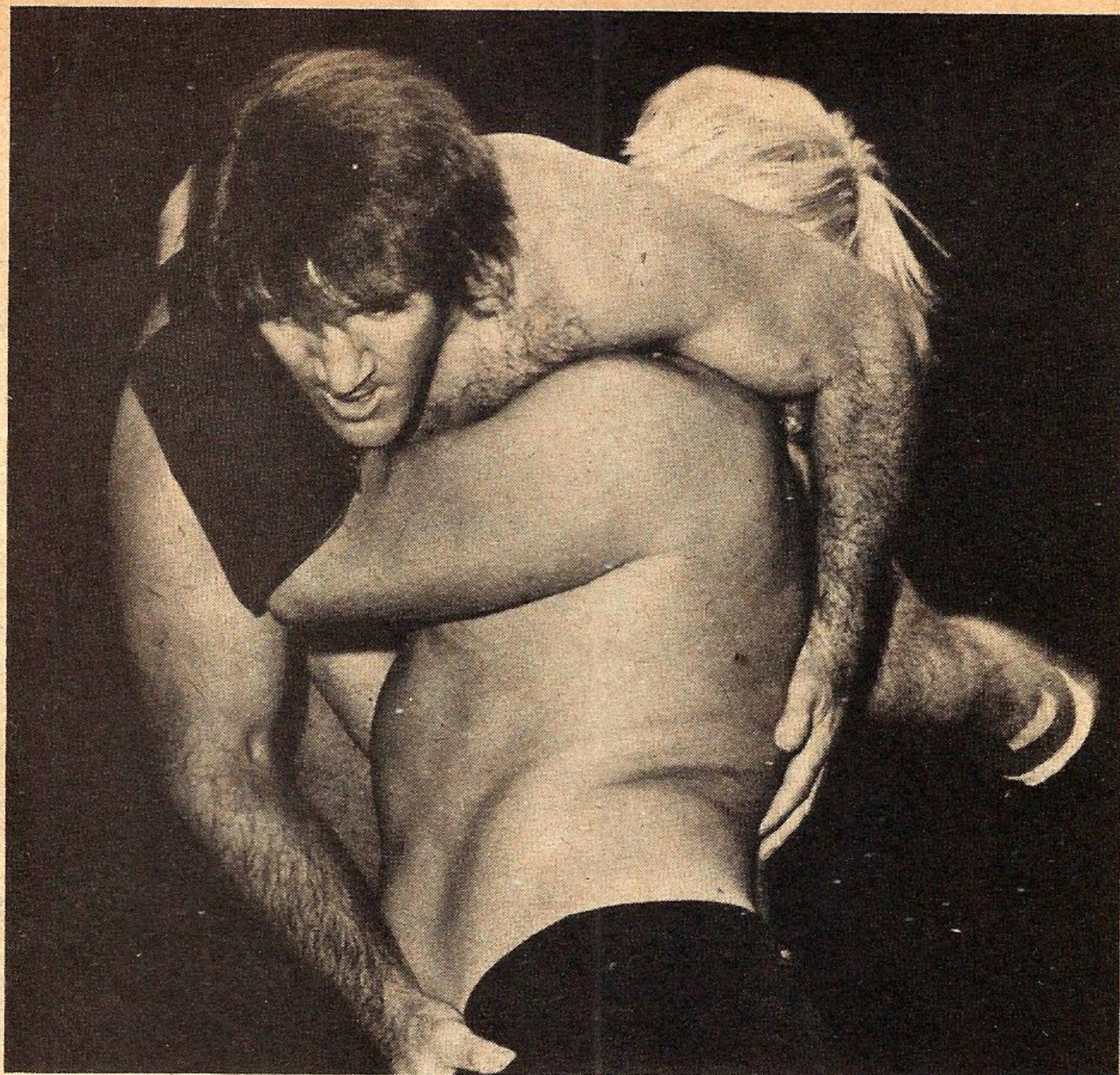
however, I wanted to continue with the match. Ironically, they stopped the bout because of cuts I received, not my neck injury.

Before the match, I had asked the referee to examine the elbow pad. Then I examined it. There's no question there was nothing there—then. As far as my injury later, I've no idea how he got the foreign object in the elbow pad. I was already stunned because he'd scooped me in the air and smashed me in the back of the neck. I was able to continue after that blow but I was groggy, setting me up for the Lariat—which can't finish me unless the elbow pad is loaded!

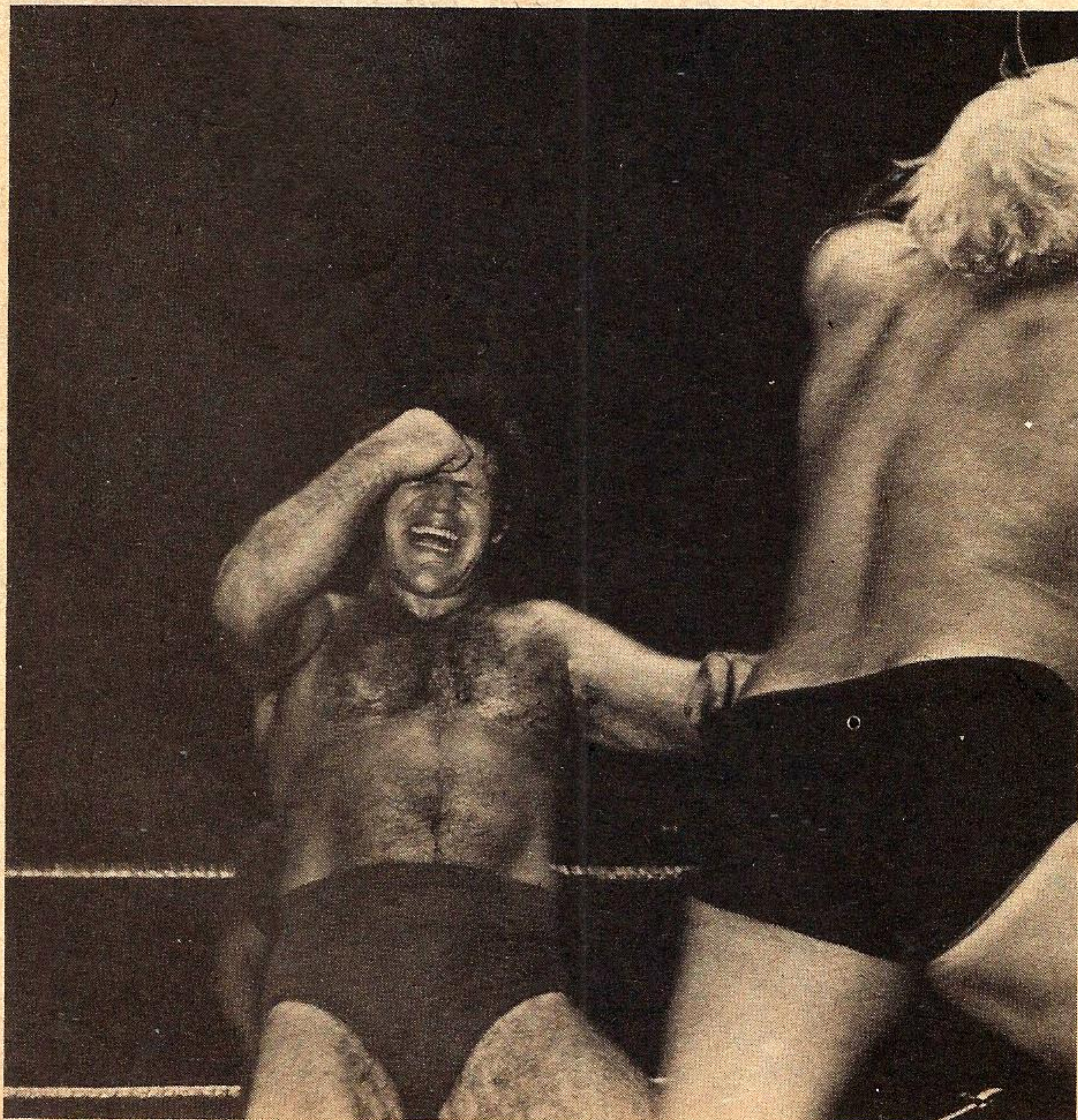
My manager, Arnold Skoaland, was very suspicious from the beginning. Arnold, I believe, had warned me that Freddie Blassie, Hansen's manager, had left something outside the ring, someplace near the corner. When Hansen stepped through the ropes, I thought he was just trying to kill time. Arnold called me over right away and warned me Hansen might have gotten a foreign object of some kind.

I felt the pain while I was in the ring, but I still felt I was able to wrestle real hard. At least I felt I was still giving it all I had, though I heard from people later that from the





A stunned Bruno feels the pain of Hansen's fateful slam (above), the maneuver which cracked Sammartino's vertebrae. Though Bruno manages to continue wrestling, a perfectly delivered lariat by Hansen (below), with a loaded elbowpad, breaks Bruno's neck.



moment of the blow I slowed down appreciably. I guess I was just doing the best with what I had left.

It wasn't until I left the ring that the pain really started. It was coming stronger every second—numbness in my arm, my side, in my leg. By the time I got in the dressing room, I was in excruciating pain. Two friends, Dom DeNucci and Tony Parisi, had to help me to the shower. I was even suffering double vision. After the doctors treated my cuts, an ambulance was waiting to take me to St. Clair Hospital. By the time I got there, I was in really, really bad pain.

I was quickly given tests and X-rays. Even without seeing the results, they wanted me to stay. They felt they had seen some damage there. But I felt I had to get back to Pittsburgh.

My father is 85 years old; my mother is almost 80. I could just imagine the panic they would have felt had I stayed in New York. If I was near, they could see me and they wouldn't be so scared as to my condition. So I came back to Pittsburgh and went right to the hospital.

I know a little bit about the body. I realized when they told me the diagnosis, inside the vertebrae, and the little discs between the vertebrae, is the spinal cord. The spinal cord is a very delicate organ. It could very easily be snapped. So I was curious to see how deep the fracture was, whether I had damaged some of the spinal cord. But when the neurosurgeon checked, he was convinced there was no damage to the cord. This was a great relief!

Yet, I still didn't know the consequences of this injury. I've had injuries before, even neck injuries, but nothing like this. I didn't know what this actually meant. I was very puzzled, confused, and concerned as to what was going to happen to me.

After the doctors got all through, the neurosurgeon scared me a little because he felt after I healed, there would be extreme danger if I was to go back to wrestling. But the orthopedic surgeon, the same man who treats the Pittsburgh Steelers, feels the size of my neck, the development of the neck muscles, and the bone size gives me enough protection to very easily wrestle again with no trouble. My personal physician says that I should take my time, but sees no permanent damage to prevent a return to

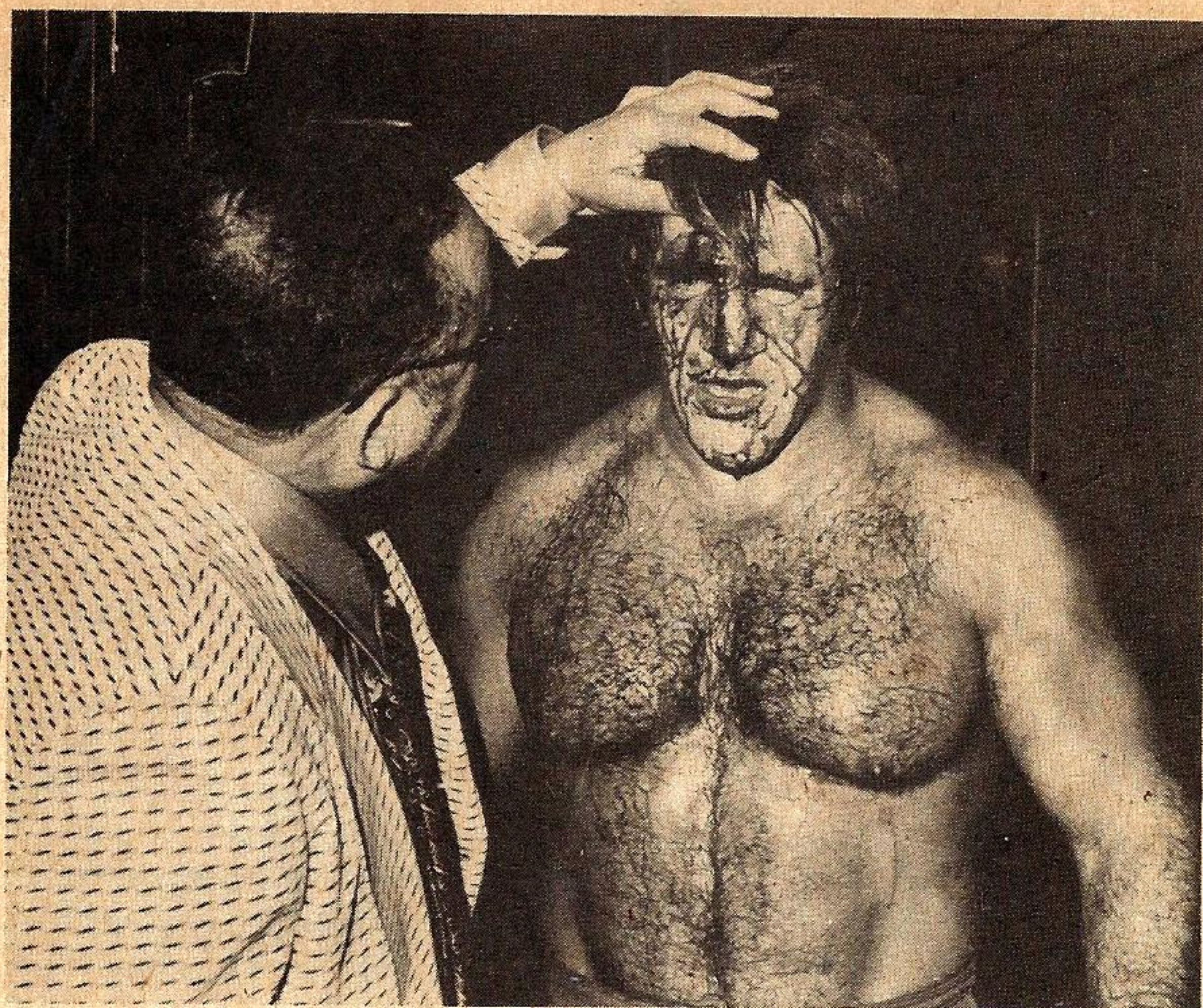
A black and white photograph of Bruno Sammartino. He is wearing a checkered suit and a white neck brace. He is standing next to a large bouquet of white flowers. The photo is on the left side of the page.

BRUNO'S MESSAGE TO HIS FANS

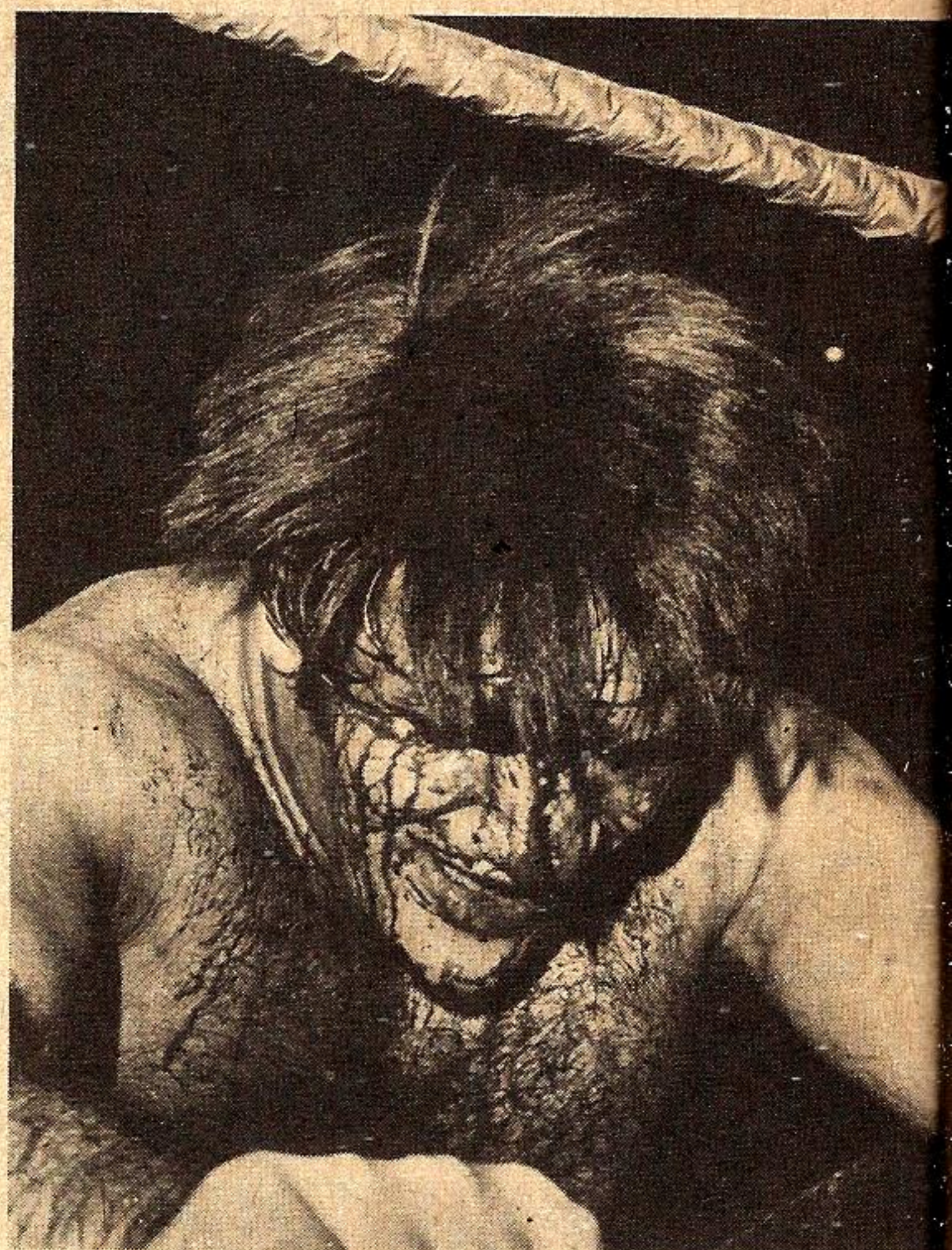
“

I've decided to go back to wrestling, despite my family's feeling and so forth, because of you, the fans. When you're laying here, getting the kind of mail I've been getting, the gifts I've received, it's a wonderful thing. When I read those letters, seeing how badly the people want me back, I can't take myself away from that responsibility. I owe my fans the attempt at a comeback. I honestly feel they're the ones helping me recuperate, strengthening my will to go out there and be with them again!

”



The arena physician examines Bruno's deep gashes (left), not knowing Sammartino's real pain is not from the cuts he suffered in combat (below); it is the agony of a broken neck torturing the WWWF champion.



wrestling.

Unfortunately, my family doesn't want me to go back; during the first few days after the injury, I was thinking they were right. But now that I'm improving, I'm most anxious to get back. I do feel the end hasn't come for me yet. I feel I was in great shape; I've never felt better in my life before this accident happened. I feel I do have a couple more years. Of course, I don't want to leave the game I love. It's been so good to me.

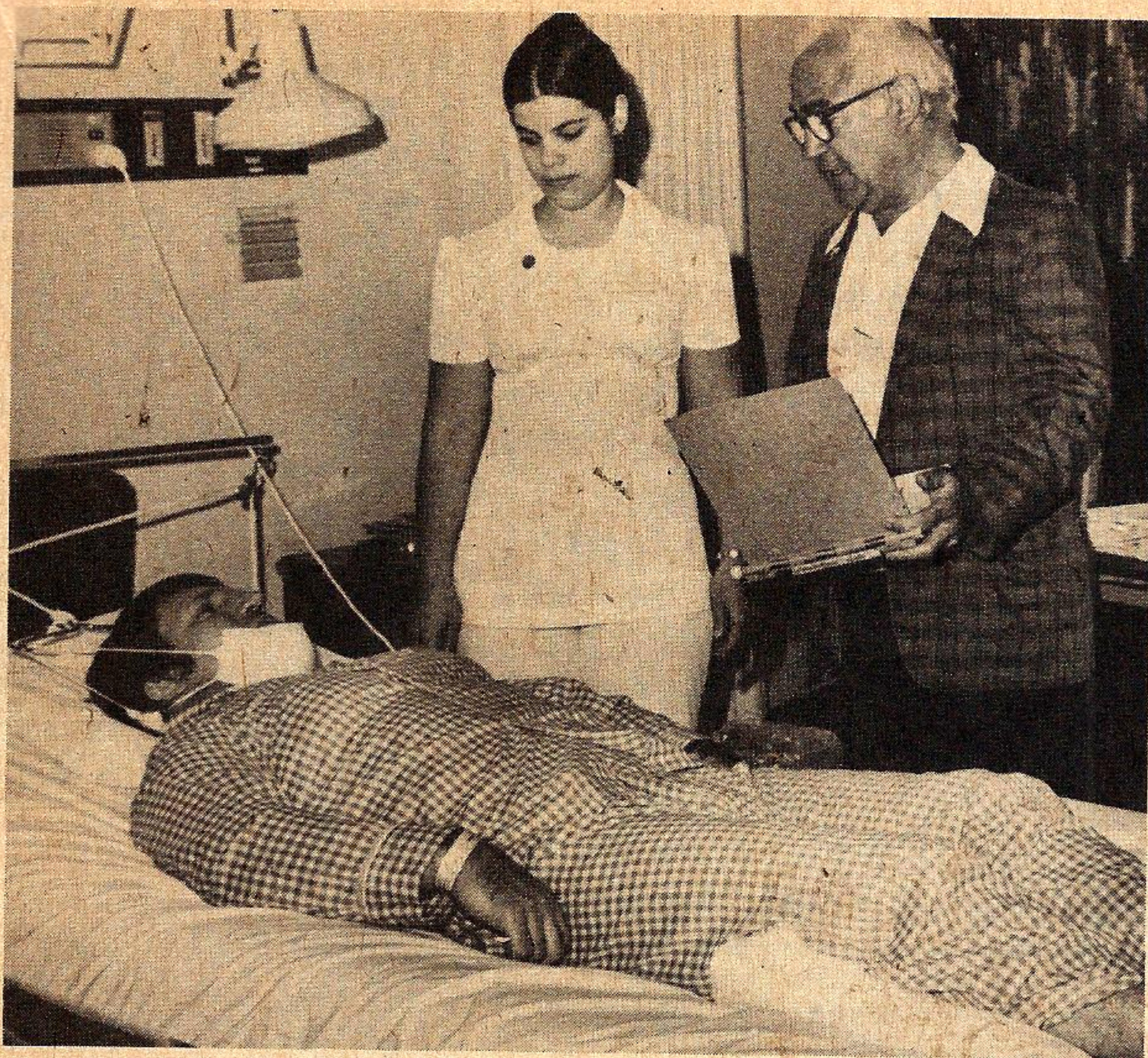
It's been good enough to me that I can financially absorb this kind of injury; I'm a very lucky man. Wrestling a long time, being champion almost 11 years, I can take care of my future and injuries like this. However, for wrestlers as well as boxers, an injury like this can be totally disastrous. One who hasn't the good fortune I've enjoyed can have an accident like this and have no protection of any kind.

Perhaps the security wrestling has given me has made it possible for me to have no lasting bitterness about the injury. At first I felt real bitterness about it. But when you walk into that ring, you know the dangers. You can't really stay bitter when you take a calculated risk.

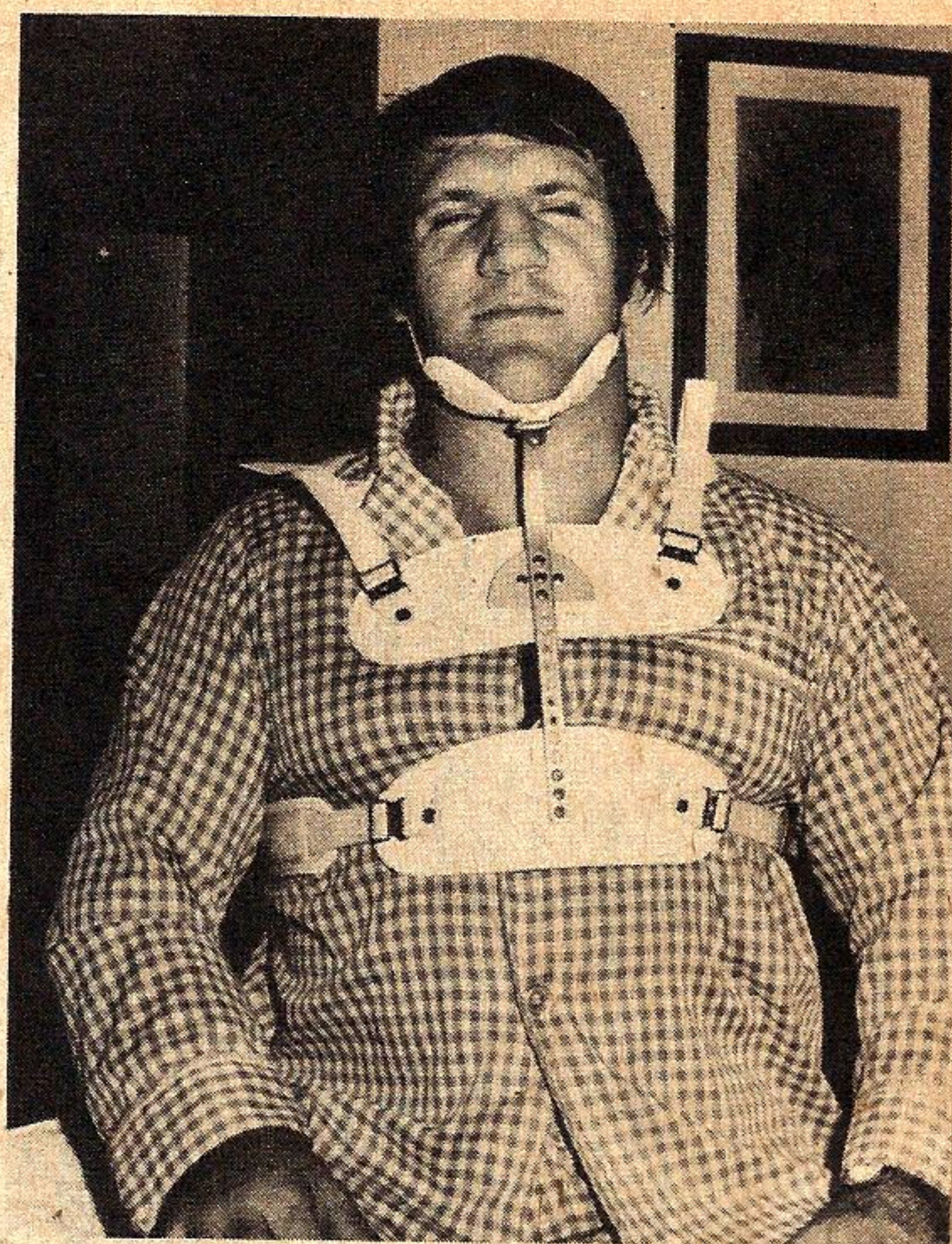
The real bitterness is reserved for Stan Hansen. He put some weapon in his armband. That tells me right there he was trying to permanently injure me. I suppose I could have even forgiven that—but what happened afterwards can never be excused.

Specially trained nurses help Bruno into his brace (below). It has been devised for the champion by some of the most respected medical minds in the nation. It allows Bruno to be partially mobile and able to do simple tasks for himself.





Above: The doctor explains the findings of Sammartino's latest tests. Above right: With the help of his back and neck brace, Sammartino can sit up with only minimal pain. Below: While in the hospital, Bruno reads a copy of INSIDE WRESTLING.



While I am lying in this hospital, not knowing for a while what was going to happen to me, the man's been bragging to television, radio, and magazine reporters about how he retired me, crippled me. That makes me bitter. If he were a real man, he might say he beat me; that's okay. But to boast about ending my career, that's what given me more drive to get better, to get back in the ring. I've got to prove to Hansen, as well as the fans who've been great to me, that Hansen is not going to be the man to retire me.

When I retire, it will be of my own free will rather than because of some individual.

I'll prove I'm the better man once I'm up and around again. And I can't wait for that day to come! The first few days, because I was feeling so horrible and sick, I didn't want to do anything but lay here. But the longer I have to lay on my back, the tougher it gets to stay still.

Again, I've been fortunate to be able to have all the advantages of medical science. The doctors have devised this special brace. It's going to enable me to be up on my feet without in any way disturbing my neck. I can even go home to recuperate. I'll be able to get therapy at a medical center near my home.

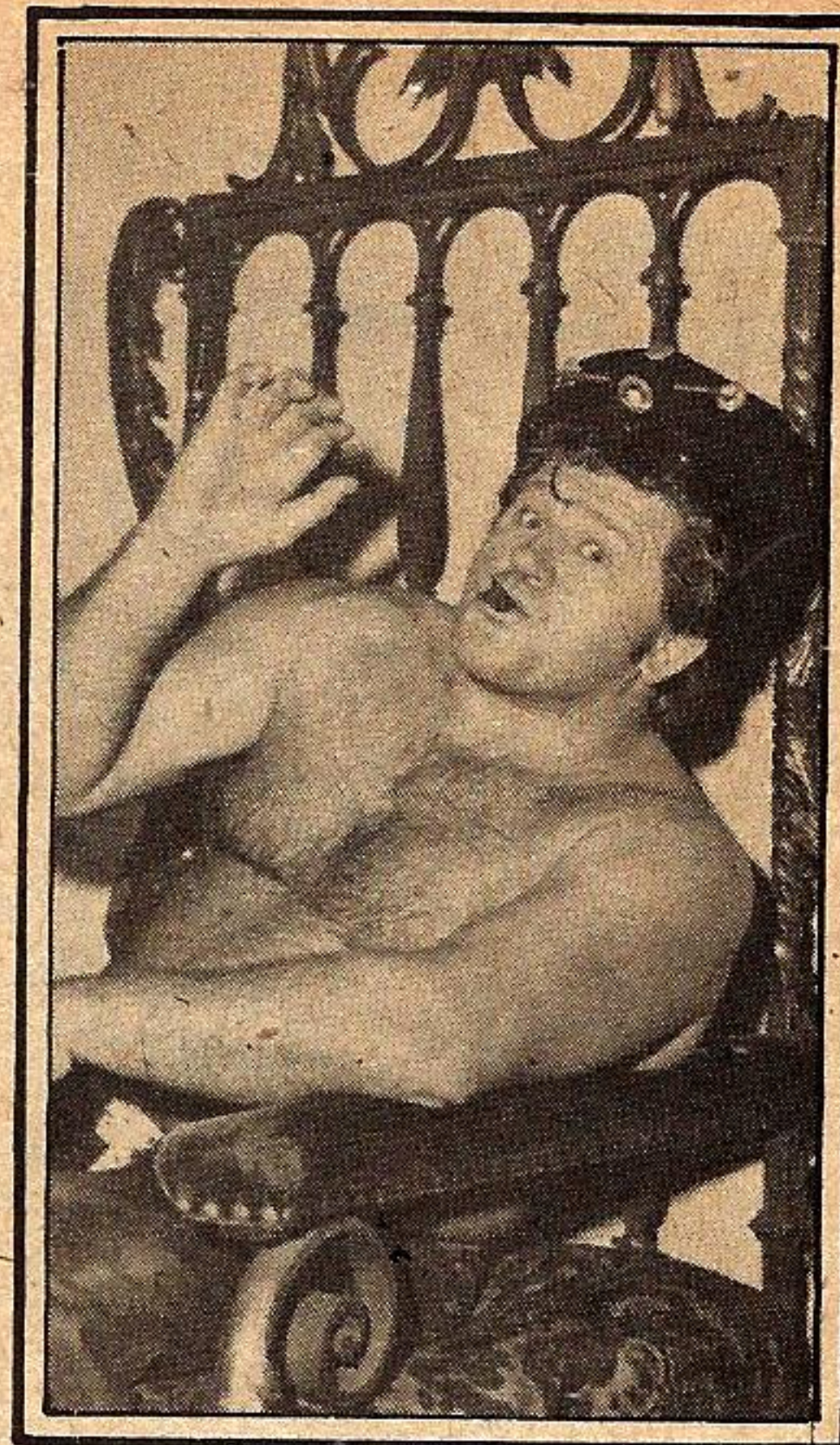
It's really going to be great getting out of my hospital bed for good.

I realize this is my last chance to recover from a serious injury like this. If this ever happens again, I'll have no choice but to quit. But it will never happen again!

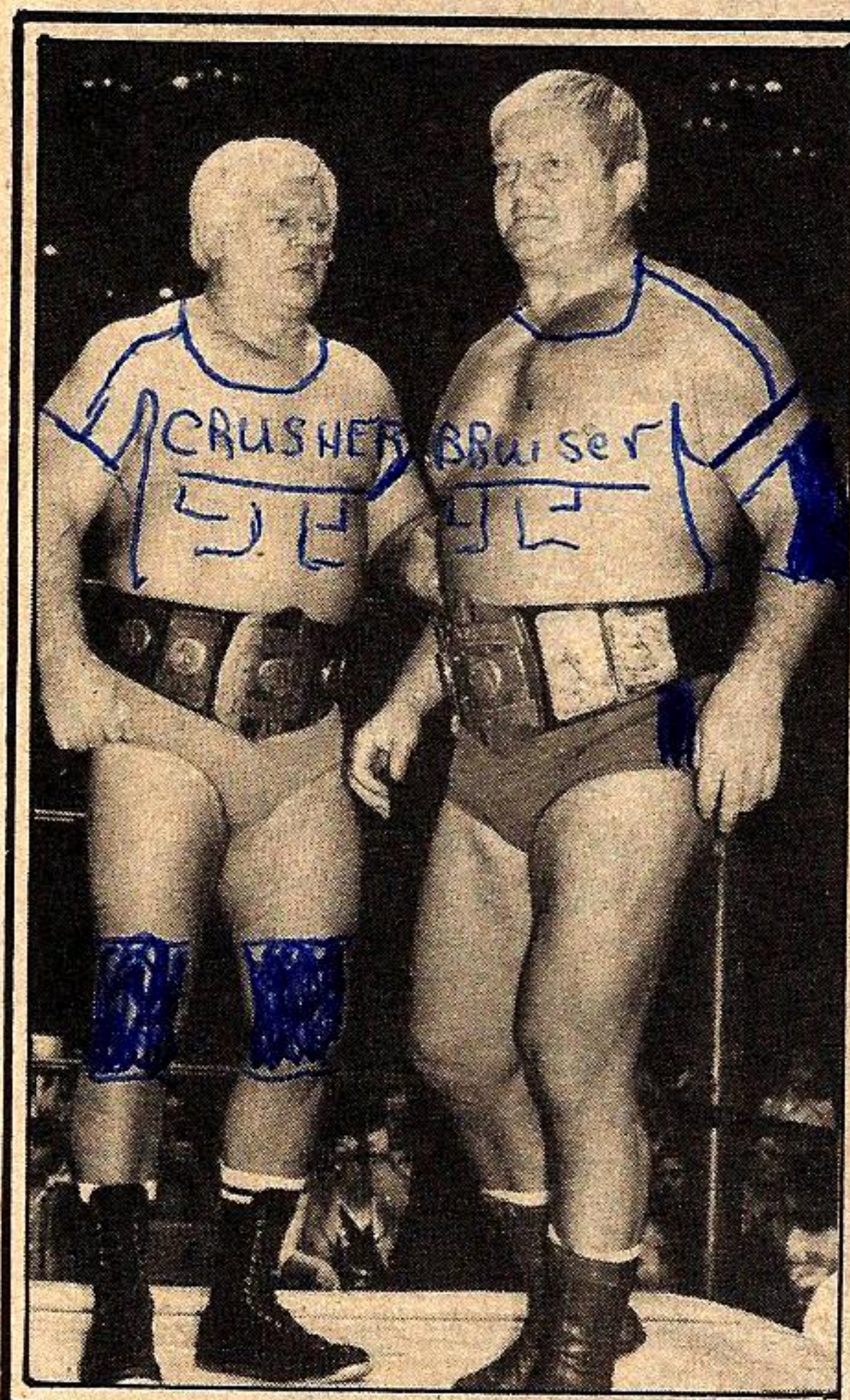


EYE ON THE MAT WORLD

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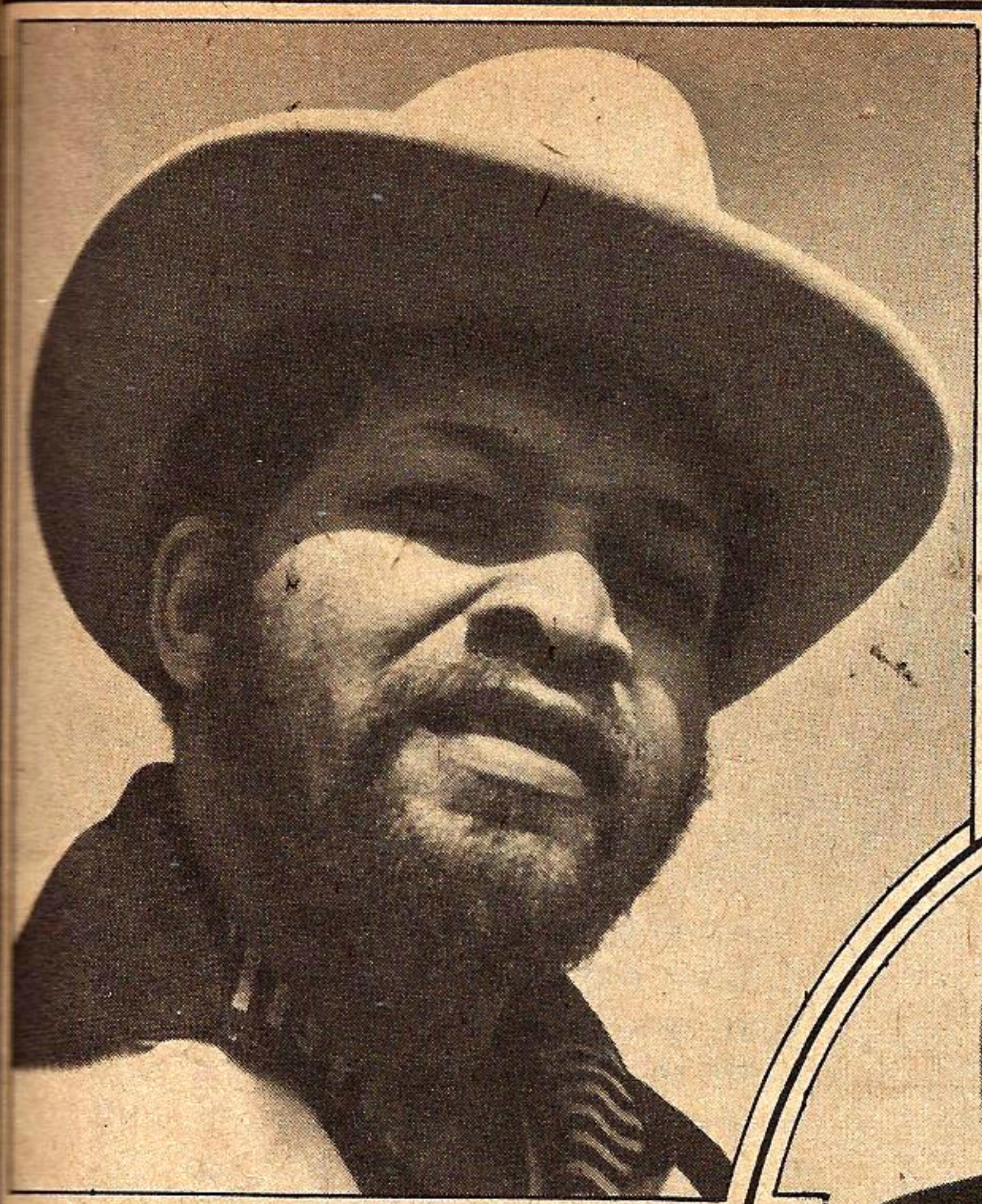


Above: Clowning to ease the pressure (he would soon be warring against 'Ox Baker!'), Bull Bullenski dons a chauffeur's cap and plops himself down in a chair having seen many better days. Left: Terrors when they wrestle, The Islanders are also experts with primitive weapons. Below: Muhammad Ali may be exaggerating, but he is truly in awe of Andre the Giant's gargantuan size. Will Andre be Ali's next opponent?

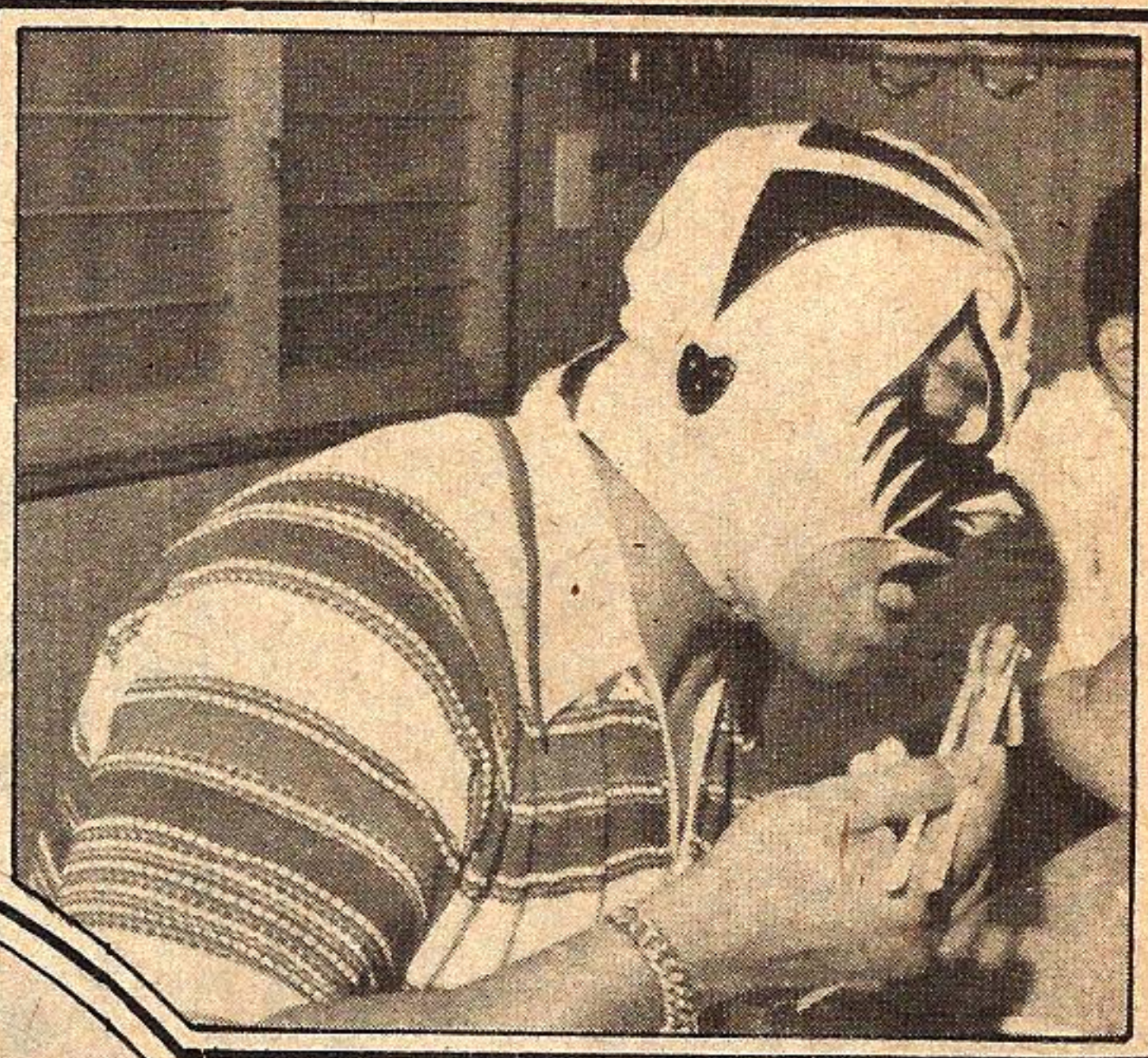


Proudly wearing the AWA tag team title belts, Crusher and Bruiser stand together before a match. They are easily one of the all-time great teams.

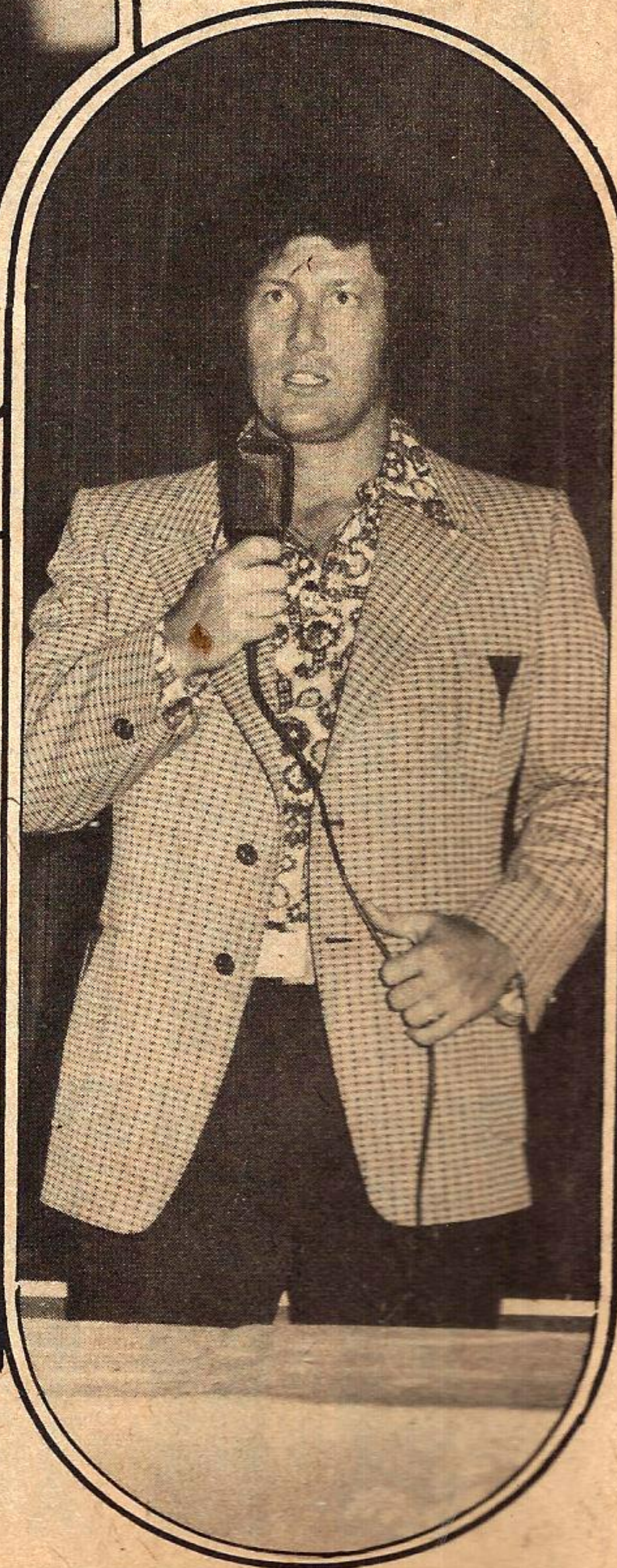
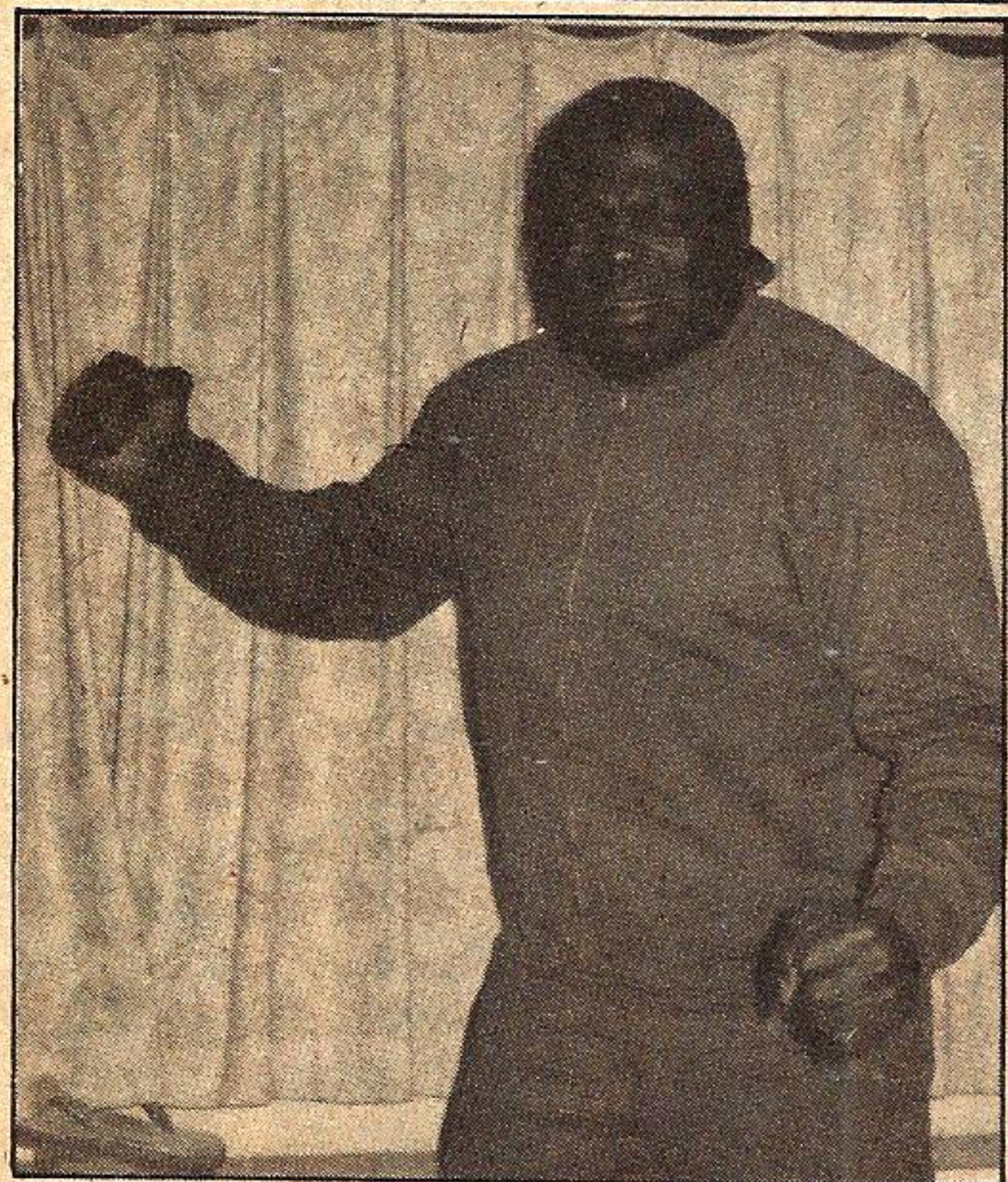
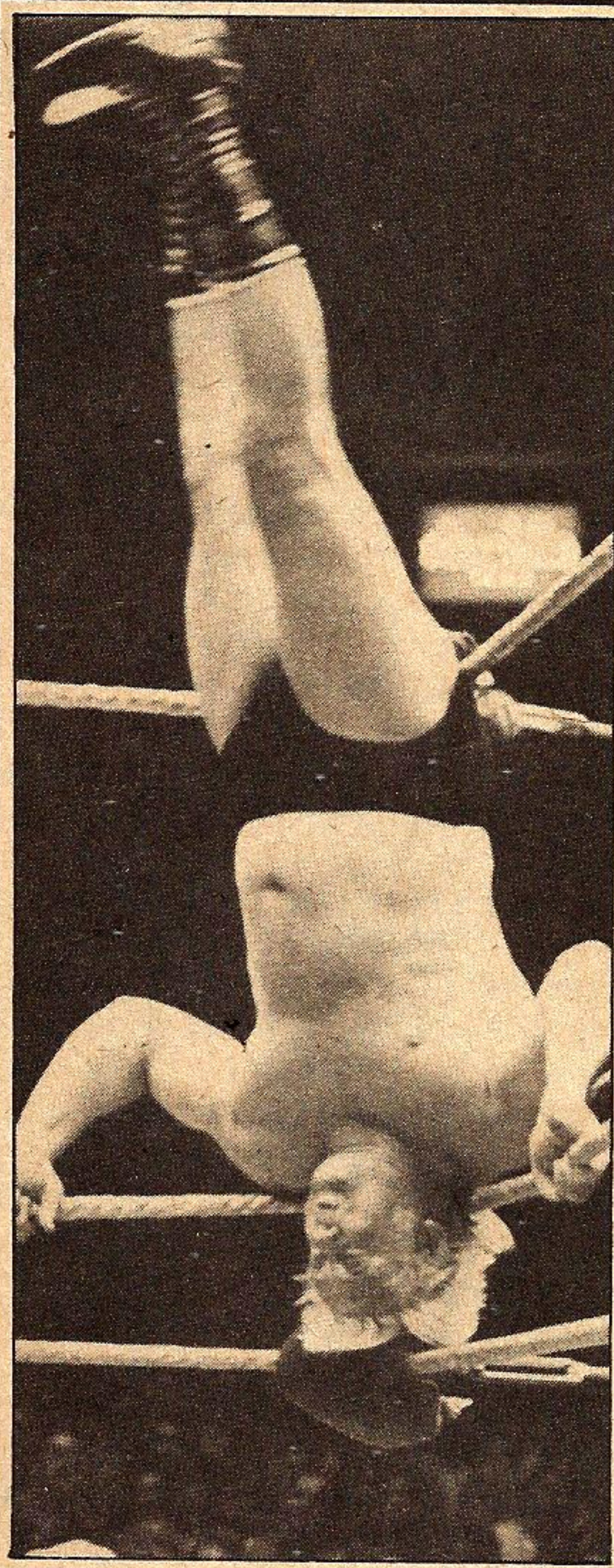
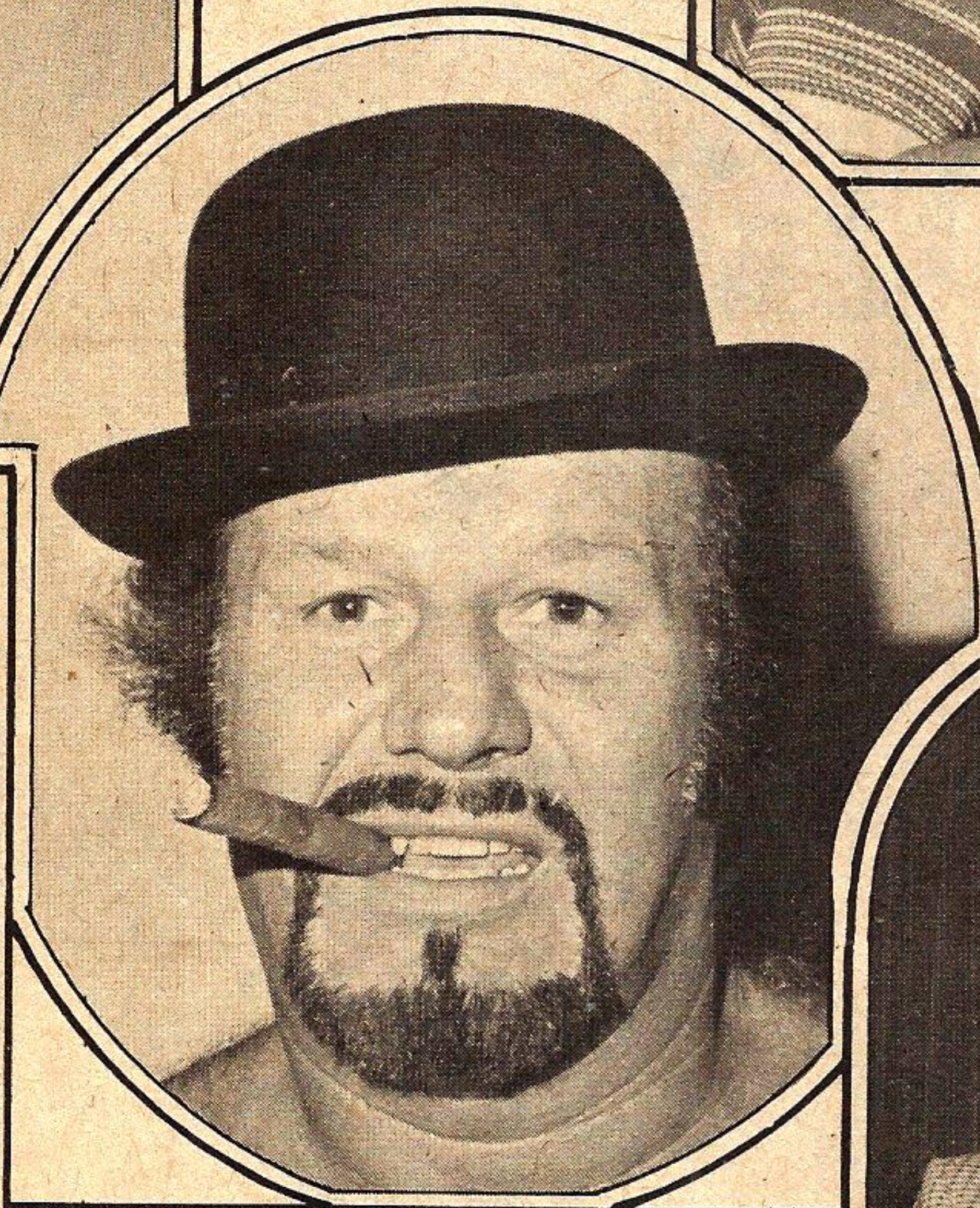




While Ernie Ladd is always seen in the most contemporary of chapeaus (left), a conservative bowler is more the style of Don Greene (below). Of course, both men have many enemies just waiting to get the chance to knock their blocks off!



Above: When he's in Japan, you can find Mil Mascaras having a great time sampling local foods. Below: Johnny Powers is a valued guest at many top sport banquets.



Above left: Ray Stevens proves his agility by balancing on the ropes and turnbuckles. Ray may be ruthless, but he's also one of the most accomplished athletes in the sport. Above right: Just the mention of Stan Hansen's name makes Bobo Brazil clench his fist in rage. Bobo can't wait to punish the man who hurt Bruno!

ANDRE THE GIANT VS. TERRY FUNK... FOR THE NWA TITLE!

THE MAN SITTING on the training table had a puzzled look on his face. Andre the Giant, a man who has wrestled all over the world against top competition, was nervous. He was trembling as if it was his first match. A chance at the world championship title will do that to a man.

No one was more shocked than Andre at his reaction. He thought no match could penetrate to the pit of his stomach; nerves were something thought to be lost in hundreds of other dressing rooms. He found them again an hour before his title match against Terry Funk.

Andre wandered aimlessly around the dressing room, his eyes glancing around, but seeing nothing. Most men react this way before a title shot; Andre thought he'd been around too long to feel this tension. He was learning no man is immune to the excitement of a title shot.

Andre had gone out of his way to avoid the excitement of a title match, never wanting to restrict himself to one area. He shocked his friends by choosing to wrestle for the championship. However, the internationally famous Andre felt it was a challenge he had yet to accept. His career demanded this match. So why was he so nervous?

The gargantuan grappler felt the need to tell people about the match. Discussing it might make the upcoming battle seem less awesome. He called friends and reporters into the dressing room. There were things which had to be said.

Andre continued to pace as he declared, "A title match has to be wrestled differently from any other. The champion has a lot of advantages which have to be taken into consideration. Not only must he be stopped from beating you, but he can't be allowed to disqualify himself and save his title. Not only can't you cheat, but you've got to make sure he can't cheat!"

"I don't blame any man for using technicalities to save his title. He'd be an idiot not to take every advantage he has. But it makes the challenger have to work so much harder than the champion. You have to wrestle a whole different way. A challenger must be careful, cunning, and constantly on the defensive. I haven't wrestled a match like this in a long time. The

Terry Funk borders on becoming senseless as Andre the Giant effectively works on Terry's head and neck. At this time, it looked like Andre was sure to be the next NWA champion!



This is the match no one thought Andre the Giant would ever take. It is also the match which may become the most important turning point in Andre's career!

rhythm of the match will be very different for me to establish. My timing could be very bad."

Andre wasn't afraid of losing; he just wanted to battle with honor. If the style he needed to adopt for a title match was awkward and sloppy, he would be humiliated. That was what made Andre scared—why he needed people around him. Most of those present had seen Andre's greatest triumphs. They reminded the Giant of his best times. It was a reassurance he needed.

Andre would have been more reassured if he could have peered into Terry Funk's dressing room. Terry was still pouring over various strategies, trying to decide the best ones to use. Crumpled papers lay all over the dressing room. Terry was like a chess player studying different games, trying to figure out how his foe will combat certain maneuvers. He was anything but confident.

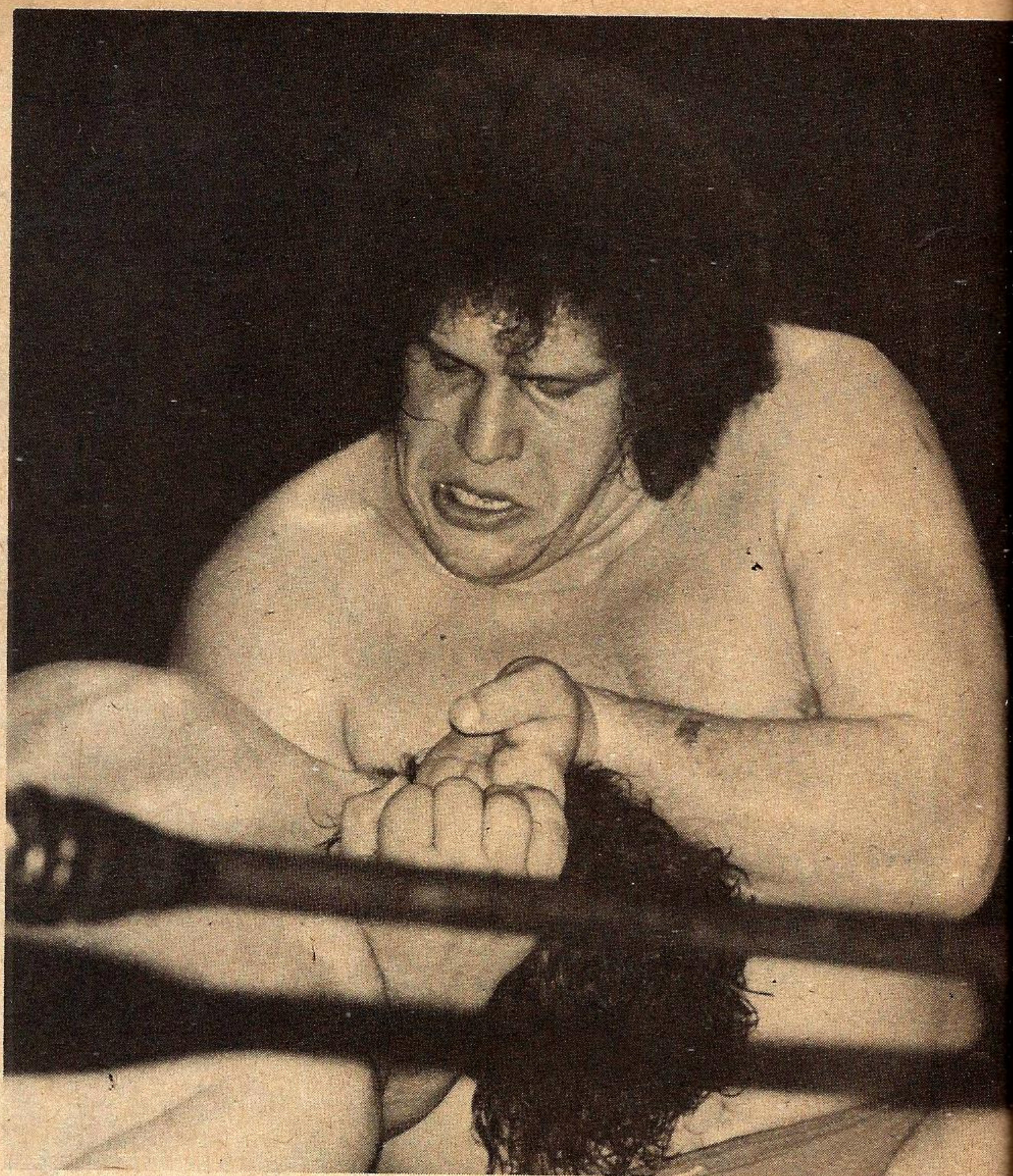
Terry refused to answer any questions before the match. Never a man known for his politeness to the press, Funk threatened anyone who talked to him. He was in an ugly mood. At these times, distance is the best thing you can put between yourself and Funk.

Finally, it was time for the men to enter the arena. Terry fastened the championship belt around his waist. His hands lingered over the elaborate buckle, as if he was trying to remember how it felt for future reference. It was not the action of a man expecting to rebuckle the belt when the evening was over.

Nonetheless, Terry strode proudly into the arena. He was the champion. The title would be taken away from him—after the battle of the challenger's life!

The challenger was equally impressive as he entered the arena. His huge size was breathtaking. One never gets used to his gargantuan frame. Everyone tried to see if the challenger's size was having any psychological effect on the champion. Terry's face remained impassive as he stared at Andre from across the ring. To Funk, being champion is more impressive than being a giant.

One could see the deep mutual respect each man had for the other in the first minute of battle. They were both cautious, their eyes examining each other's body. They



Andre's huge hands almost obscure Terry's head as the giant tries to finish Funk off late in the match. Only Terry's courage and veteran cunning allows him to escape from this devastating hold. Now that Andre has decided to enter championship competition, how much longer can Funk hope to escape from the giant's greatness?

were looking for some slight sign of weakness; some bruise which could be aggravated; a limb being favored. They clutched and broke repeatedly, both men expertly searching for a point to attack. After a minute of this probing, they separated. Their faces revealed how unsuccessful their first encounter had been.

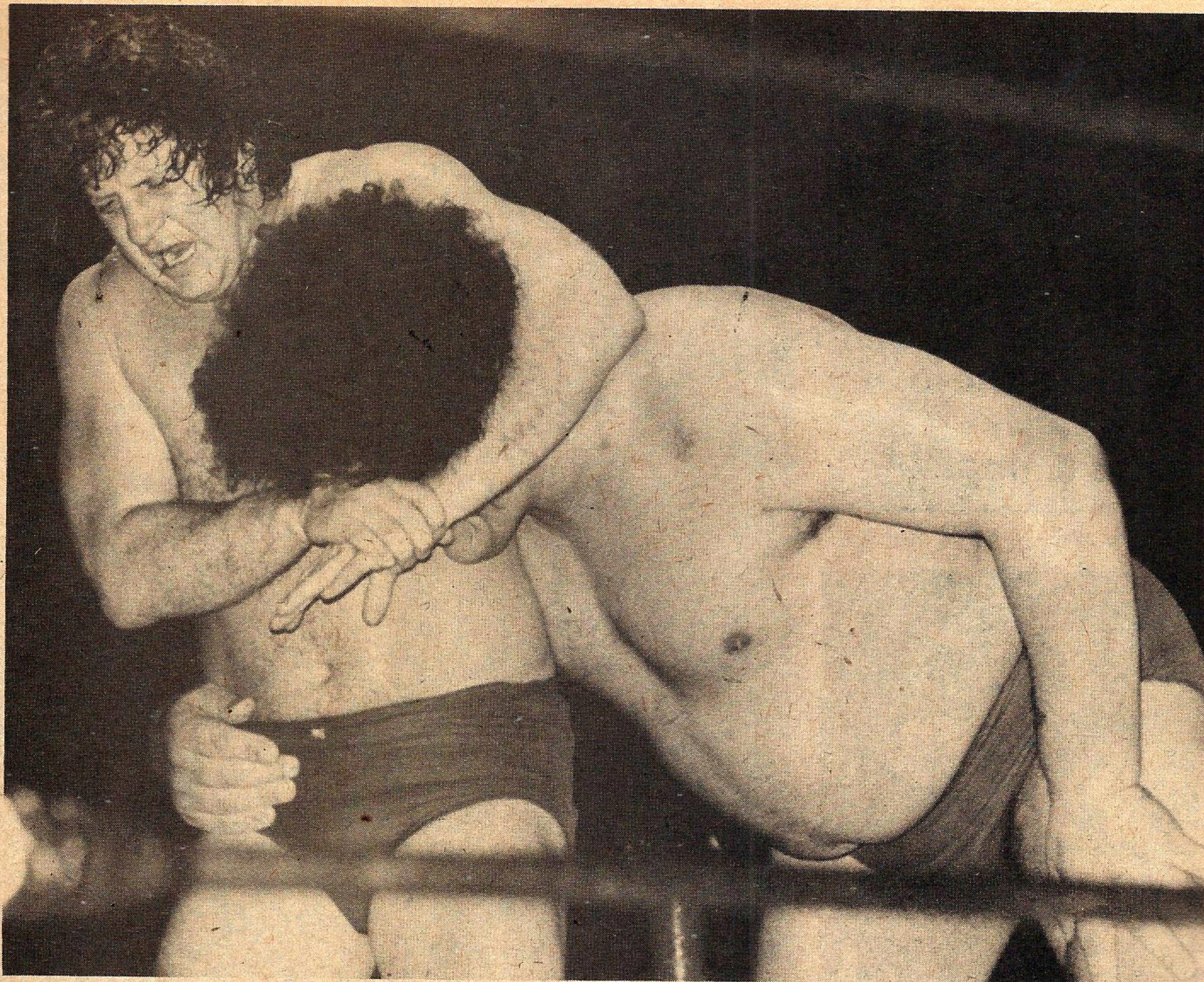
Again, cautiously, the two men began to probe each other's defenses. Neither man would make the first mistake. This match would be won by greatness; it would not be lost by error. Then Terry, never one to be patient, made the first move. He tried to set Andre up for a spinning toe-hold. Andre crouched and the two men collided head on. They collapsed to the canvas, sprung to their feet, and then the battle was on.

For 20 minutes, the two men

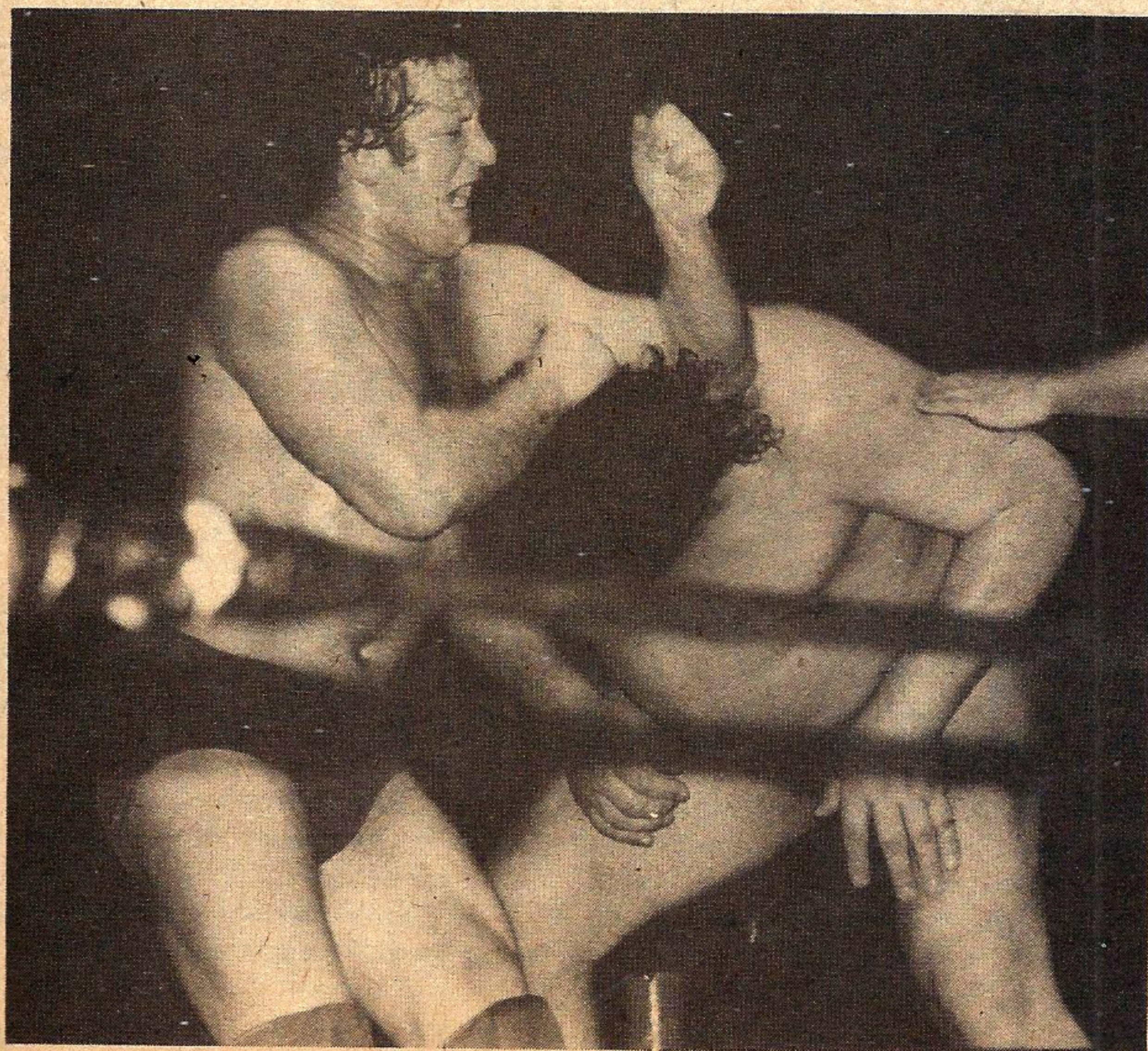
were a whirlwind of action. Neither man could capture the other for any length of time. The sweat of their bodies made skins slippery and difficult to hold. Even Andre's powerful bearhug proved ineffective against Terry's squirming. And Funk was astounded how agile Andre was in escaping his holds. It was a brilliant exhibition of wrestling excellence.

As the battle wore on, the two men grew weary. The crispness of their movements was gone; they were sluggish and unable to mount a sustained attack. The winner would be determined by courage and luck; skill was no longer a consideration.

Terry, wanting the victory for the glory of his title, waded in. His legs were heavy to him; his arms refused to obey his mind's commands; he



Terry Funk employs a headlock (above) and elbowsmash (left) in his concentrated attack in the match's opening minutes.



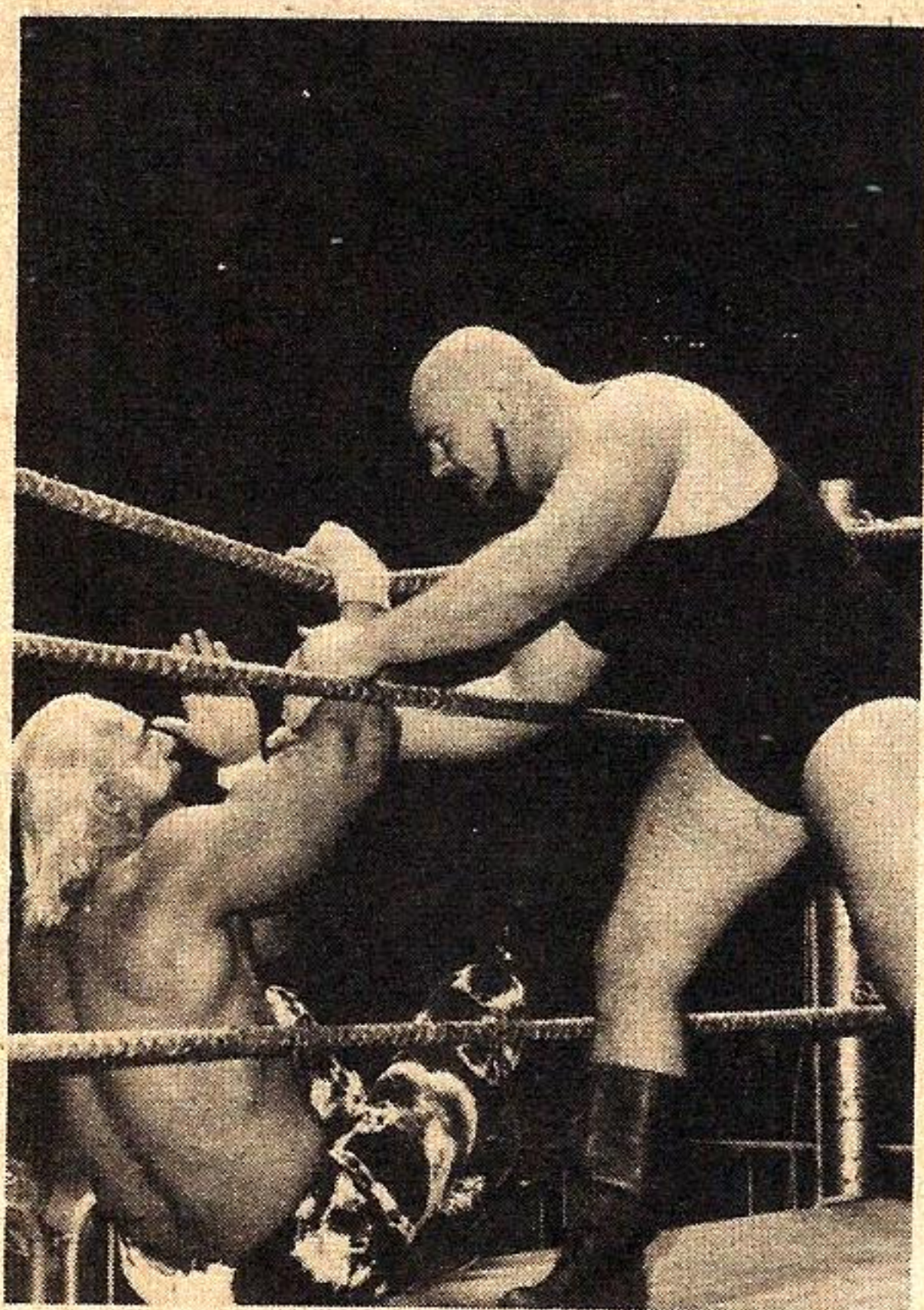
kept attacking. Andre, equally spent, was astonished. The two men grabbed at each other, hoping to find a hold which would lead to victory. It was in-fighting at its legally ugliest. It was not a pretty sight.

Both men were enraged by this encounter. Andre, his eyes wider with anger, no longer realized what he was doing. All that operated was his instinct for survival and revenge. With a scream, he lifted Funk up and threw him over the ropes.

Terry had not yet hit the concrete when Andre realized his mistake. In the NWA, throwing a man over the ropes is immediate disqualification. Terry Funk was still champion.

Dejected, exhausted, Andre walked back to the dressing room. He has tasted world championship competition. One taste would not be enough. □

Many wonder how two egotistical men like Ivan Koloff and Billy Graham could be tag team partners. It appears the inevitable clash between the two is furiously approaching!

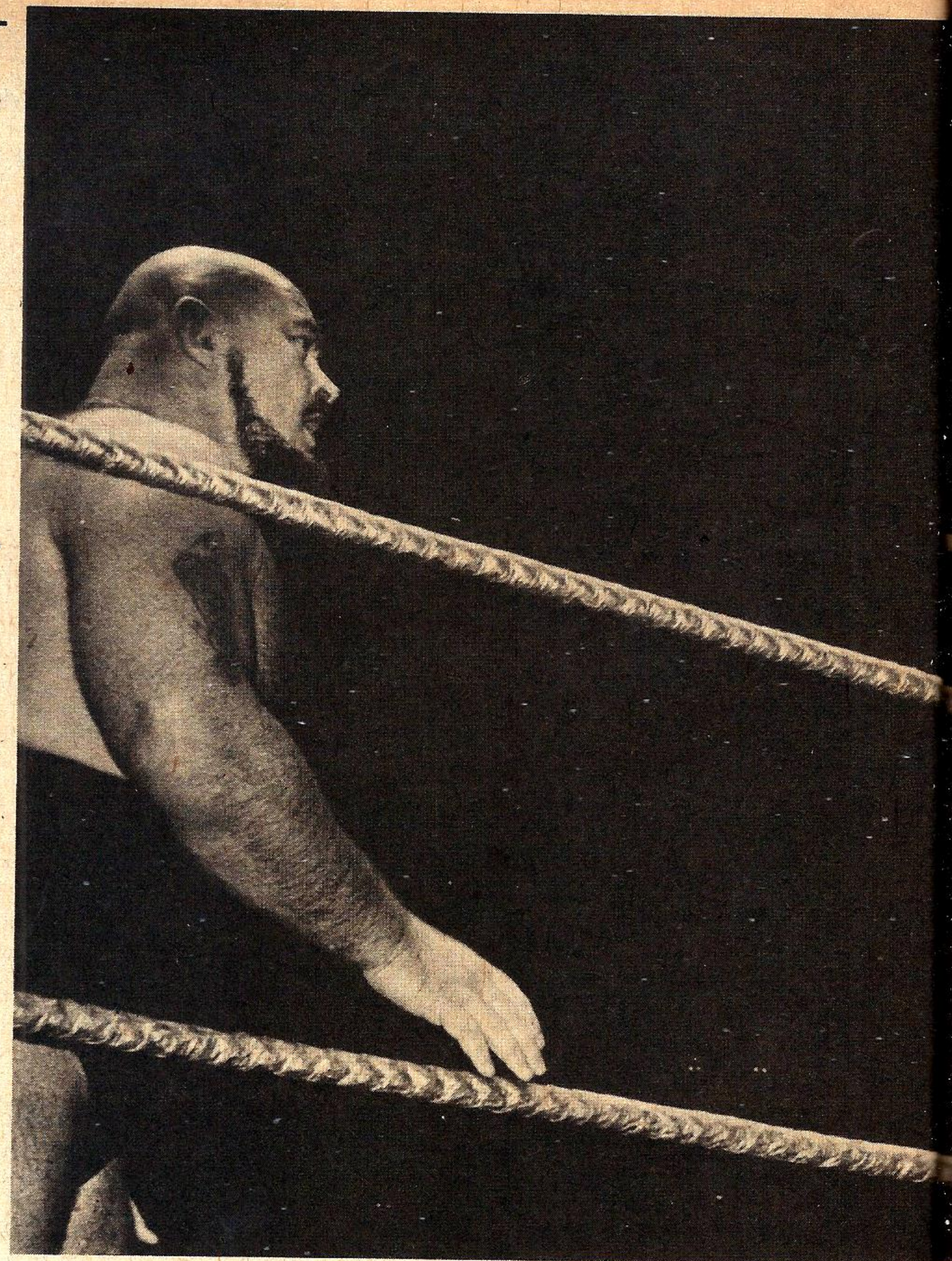


Above: Billy Graham refuses the aid of Ivan Koloff as the blond Superstar struggles on the ring apron. This is not the sign of a very happy team!

THE FIRST INDICATION of trouble went unnoticed by most veteran observers of the wrestling world. Superstar Billy Graham announced his heavy schedule made it impossible to train with Ivan Koloff prior to the team's match against Tony Parisi and Louis Cerdan.

This announcement seemed unusual. Graham does indeed have a heavy schedule, and must appear in many different arenas in the course of a week. Yet not to train at all for a tag team match was like saying you planned to lose the contest. There was trouble brewing there, but no one seemed to notice it.

Yet sources close to Ivan Koloff said



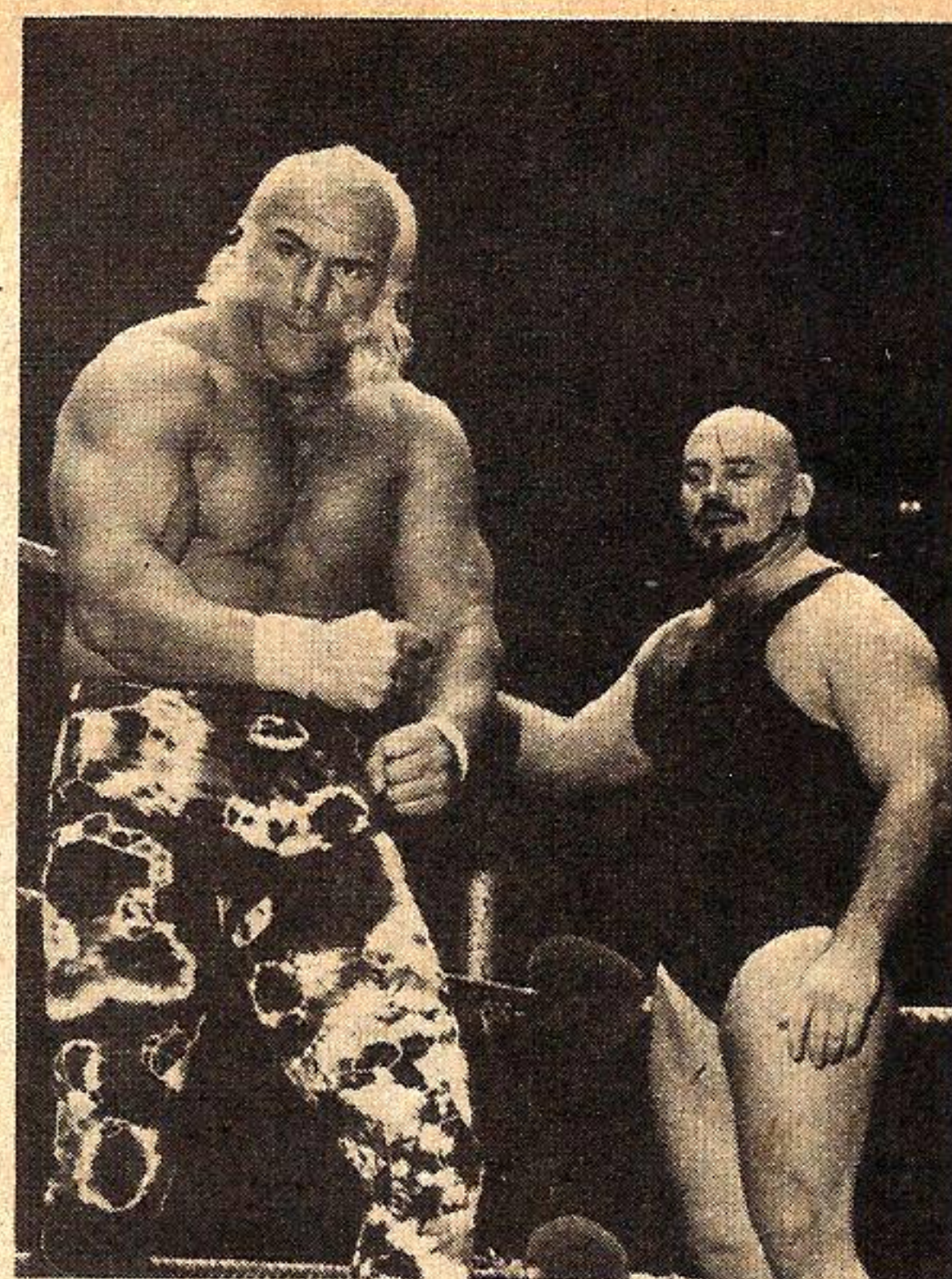
IS THERE BREWING' KOLOFF AND

the Russian wrestler went into a rage when he heard about Billy's announcement. Yes, there was trouble brewing.

The first public sign of trouble between Ivan Koloff and Superstar Graham came during their match against Parisi and Cerdan. For a team

which had been wrestling together for years, Graham and Koloff seemed oddly amateur.

Their famous signal system seemed to break down that night. Whenever one would motion for the other to tag him, the indication went unnoticed,



Is Ivan Koloff laughing at his partner, Billy Graham, instead of with him (above)? And why does Graham feel he must give Koloff instruction during a match (left), a humiliating experience for the proud and easily enraged Russian star?

TROUBLE BETWEEN SUPERSTAR?

Their wrestling was sloppy, not at all similar to the crisp, accurate style spectators had grown used to. Something was definitely wrong.

Somehow, Graham and Koloff were able to win over Parisi and Cerdan by a disqualification that night. But it was

obvious to everyone the team of Graham and Koloff had come very close to losing. As soon as the match was over, both wrestlers rushed back to separate dressing rooms. The press corps followed.

But when the wrestling reporters

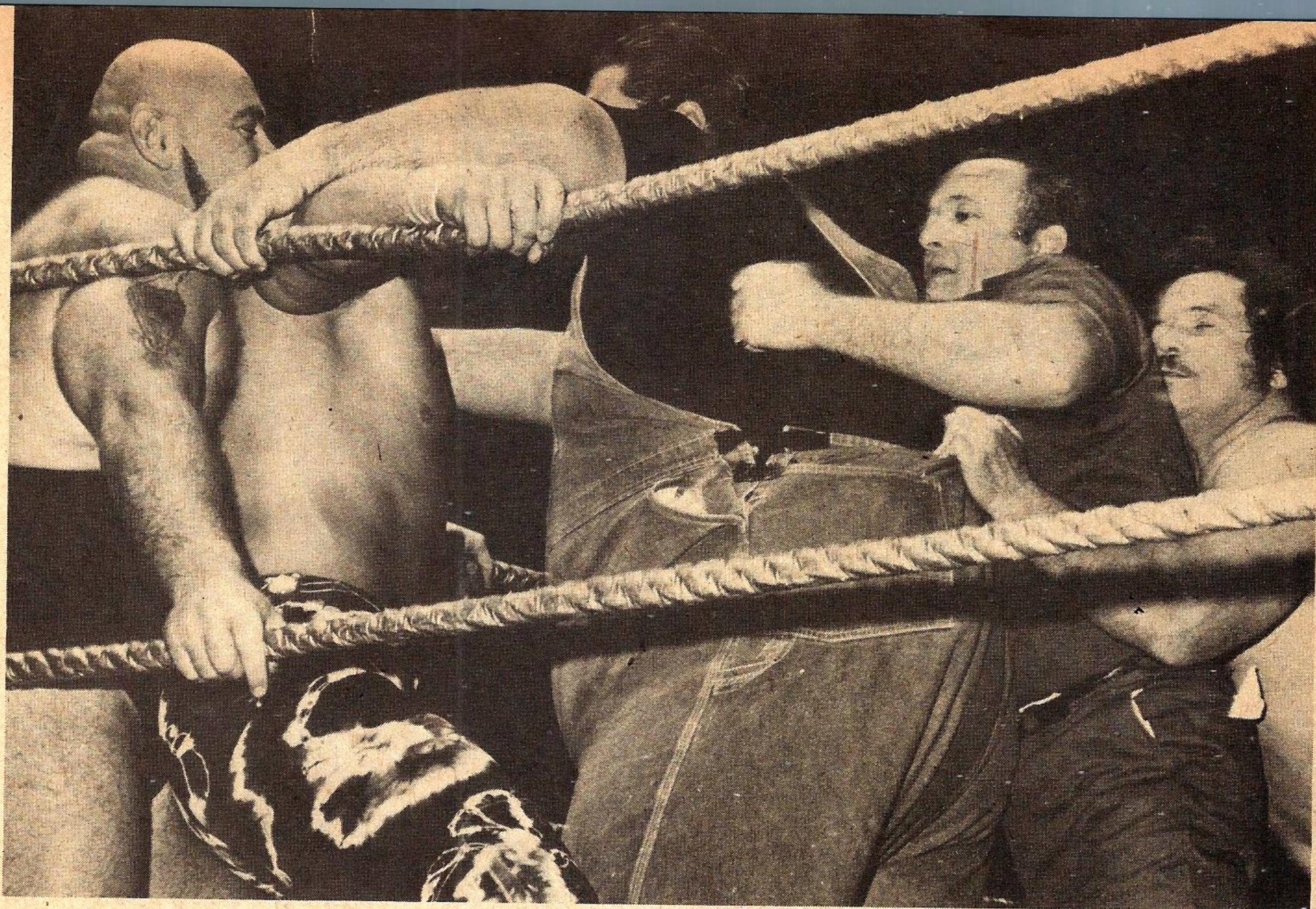
arrived at the dressing areas, they discovered they were being denied access to the two wrestlers. In front of each man's door stood his respective manager—Captain Lou Albano guarded Koloff's room, while The Grand Wizard protected Graham from the journalists. Both managers told the press their men had nothing to say. No amount of pleading from the reporters could change the managers' positions. This just served to add more fuel to the growing rumors about trouble between the two wrestlers.

The next day, a few intrepid reporters began investigating this story. It seemed obvious to them there was a split developing between Ivan Koloff and Superstar Graham. To do a complete investigation, the reporters looked into the history of this tag team.

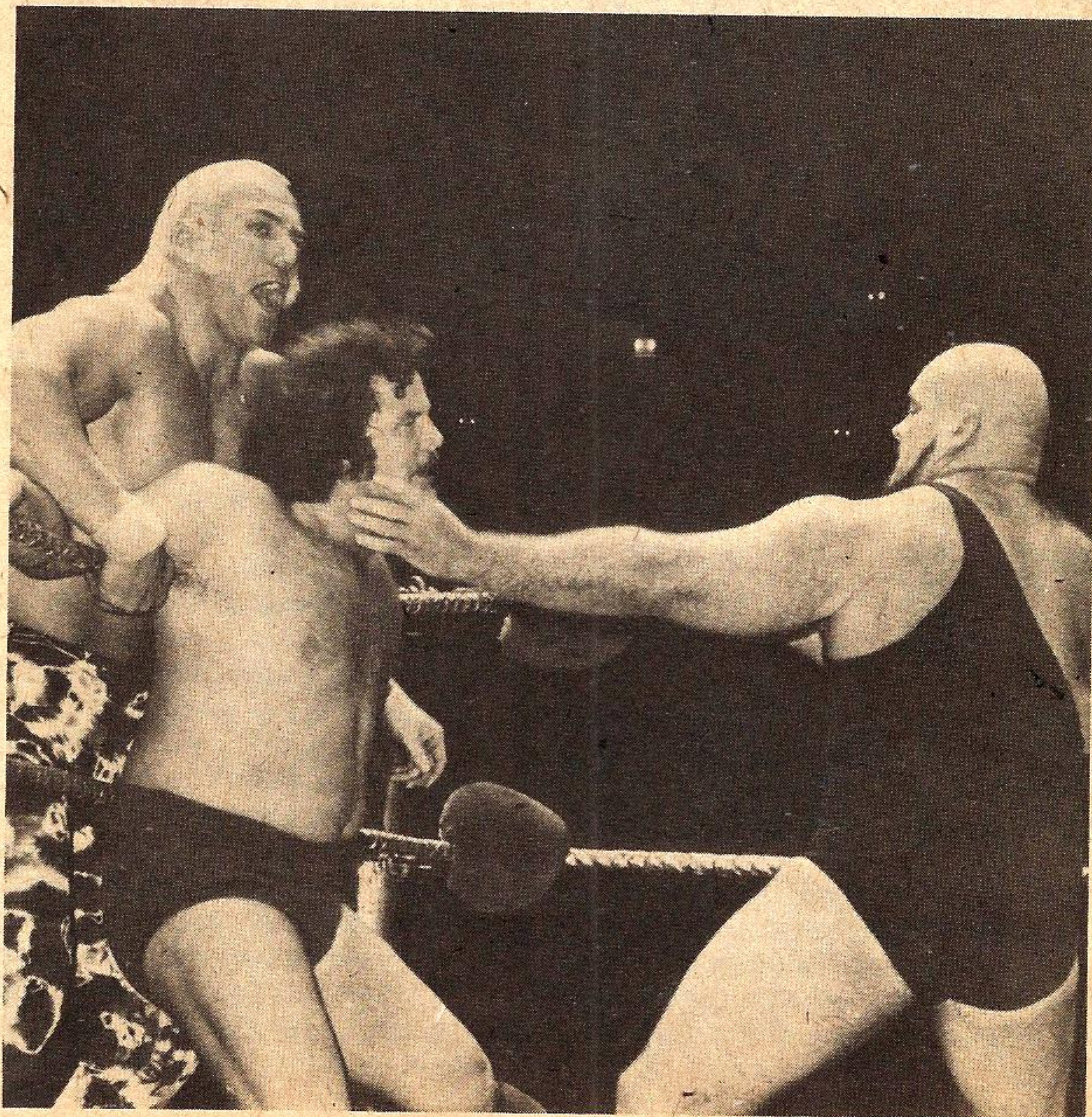
Ivan Koloff and Superstar Billy Graham first teamed together when they were both in the AWA. They worked well together, though they did not achieve the glory and fame many thought they would. After a time, it was announced that the two men were going to go their separate ways, both searching for their individual infamy.

Both men eventually gravitated to the WWWF. Both men's managers saw a golden opportunity to reunite the tag team in that area. And so it was done; Ivan Koloff and Superstar Graham were together again.

Captain Lou Albano and The



Above: Because Koloff and Graham get their signals crossed, the two teammates are trapped in a corner by Haystacks Calhoun, an unwilling referee, and Pat Barrett. Mistakes like that often lead to teams angrily breaking up. Below: The team is always in accord when it comes to pummeling a helpless foe in the corner!



Grand Wizard could not have been happier about the arrangements they had made. The reunited team, if everything went smoothly, would have the potential to capture the WWF tag team title. They seemed to have forgotten the fact that the men had parted ways once before.

The investigative reporters attempted to discuss the possible trouble with the two managers. Albano told the journalists, "All this talk about trouble between my man and his partner is pure trash, daddy! They are gettin' on famously. The only trouble between Ivan and Superstar Graham has been created by you bozos of the press! I ain't gonna say anything more."

The Grand Wizard was equally uncooperative; he flatly refused to discuss the matter with any reporters.

The investigators were prepared to stop pursuing the matter. Then another announcement was issued from Superstar Graham. Billy was refusing to train with Ivan Koloff for their upcoming match against Pat Barrett and Haystacks Calhoun! Citing his heavy schedule again, Graham said there would just be no time available for him to work out with Koloff. Yet the journalists knew the implied meaning: Superstar was staying as far from his partner as was humanly possible.

(Continued on page 64)

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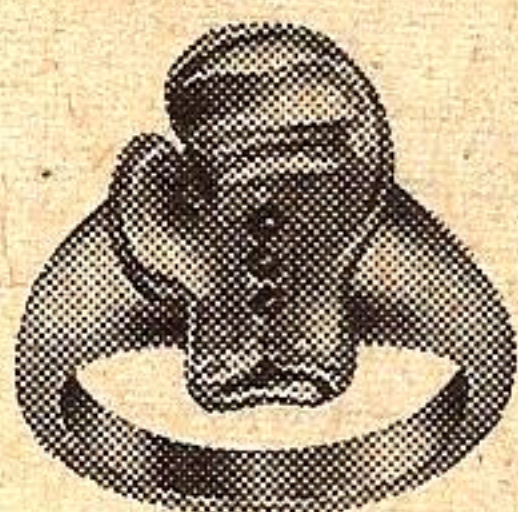


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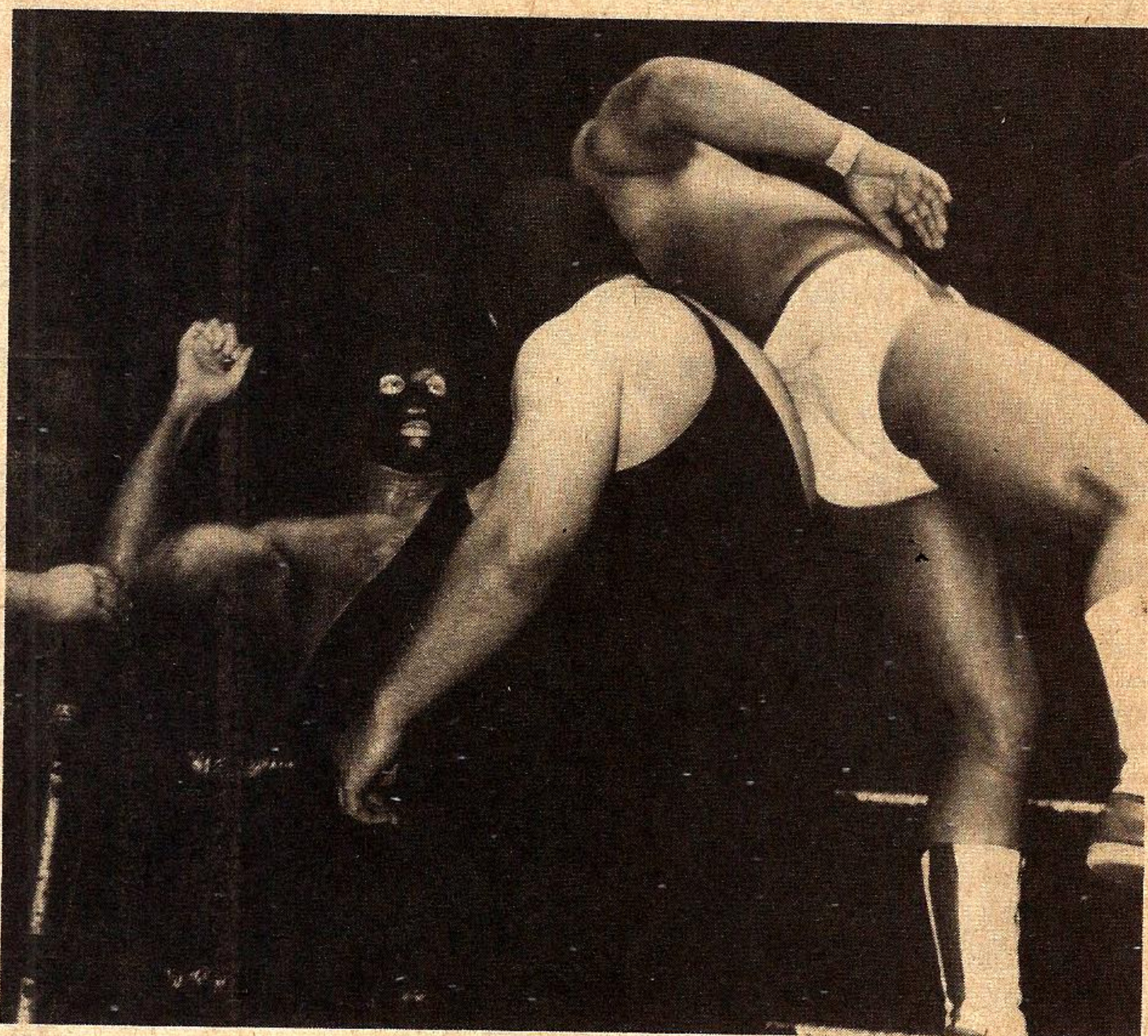
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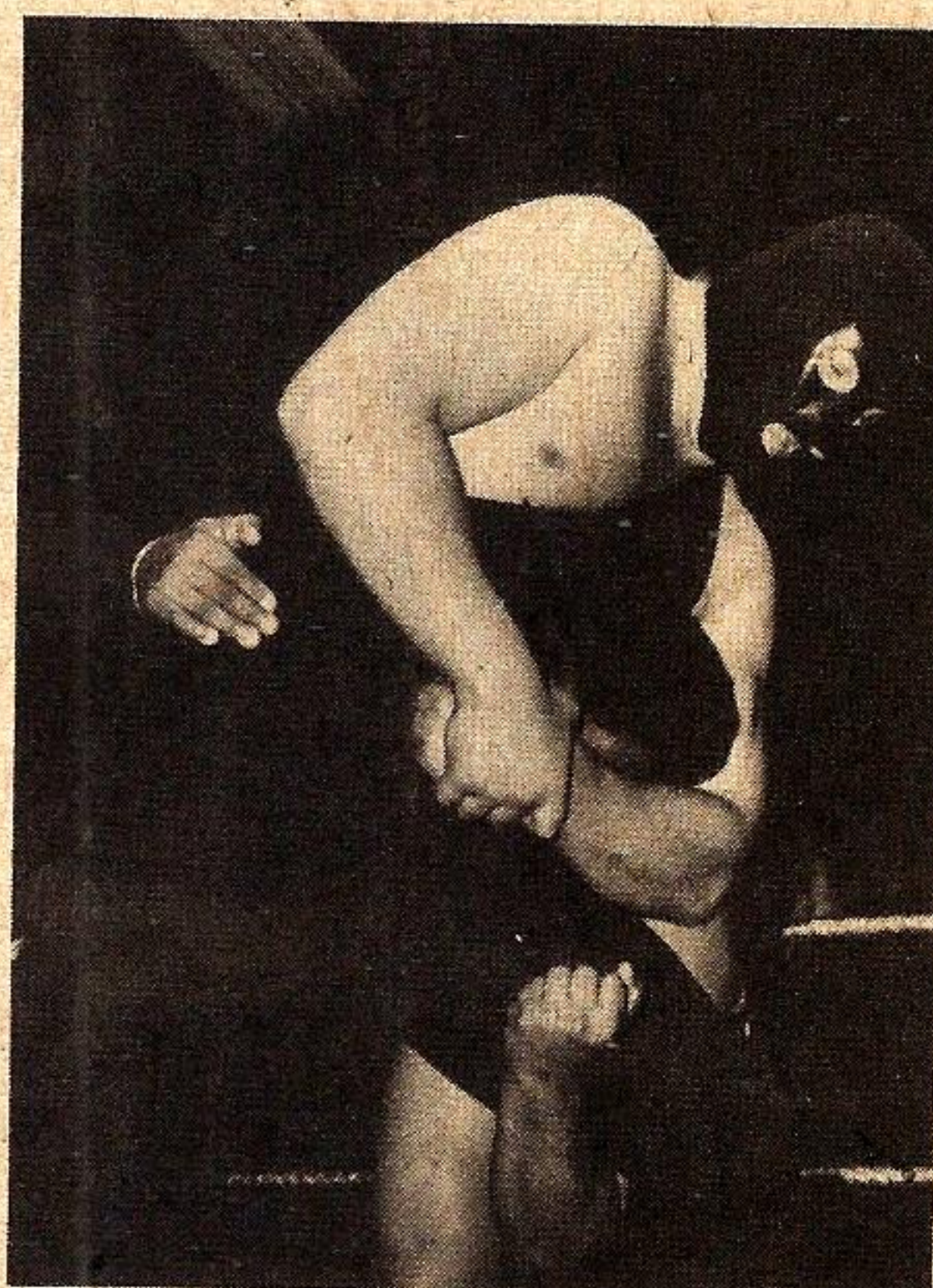
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PARISI AND CERDAN

(Continued from Page 21)



Jose Gonzales feels the wrath of the Executioners as they cruelly doubleteam him (above). Once the young wrestler is weakened, he is an easy victim of one of the Executioner's headlocks (below).



enough to combat The Executioners? Will events dictate to Parisi and Cerdan the necessity to abandon their legal maneuvers and take up the use of less-than-legal tactics?

There has been considerable speculation about this one point. Will it be necessary for the WWF champions to battle fire with fire?

Many people have guessed at what

the results would be in a match pitting the champions against The Executioners. Some feel Parisi and Cerdan could win by sticking to strictly scientific wrestling. Others believe the only way the champions could retain their title is to change their tactics against the vicious team. Yet no one is absolutely positive as to what the champions will do.

Both Louis Cerdan and Tony Parisi have tried to remain silent on the topic of The Executioners. Many reporters have attempted to discover what tactics the team would take against their vicious opponents, yet both men have refused to talk about it. "If we told you our strategy," Cerdan said, "then it will take little time for The Executioners to find out about it. We want to surprise them. That is a definite factor in successfully defending a title."

Speculation continues to mount about the tactics Parisi and Cerdan might take in defense of their championship. But no matter what they choose to do, a match between The Executioners and the WWF champions promises to be a brutal, bloody battle. □

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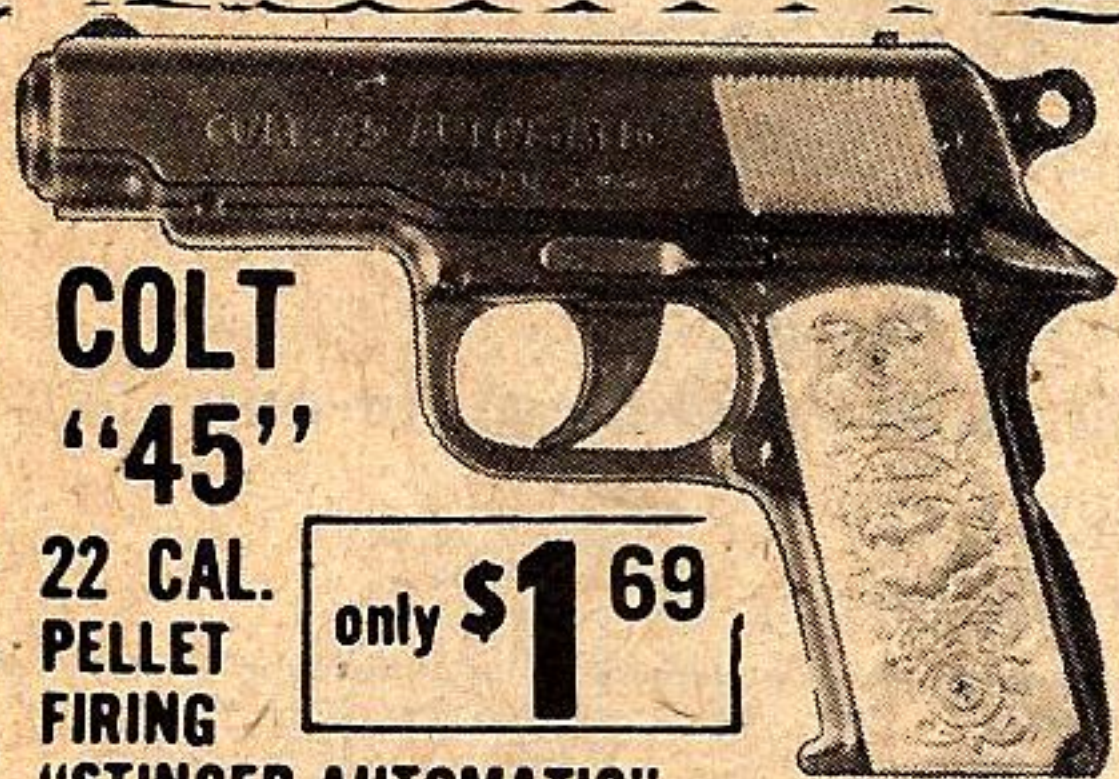


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HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING, BABY

(Continued from Page 8)

belts . . . Chris Taylor won a 21-man Battle Royal in Omaha, Nebraska—the first match of that kind in Omaha's history . . . Bob Backlund continues to knock challengers off one by one as they try to wrest the Missouri state laurels from him . . . Chavo Guerrero desperately trying to regain the Americas title he dropped to hated Roddy Piper.

Angelo Poffo beaming as son Lanny and partner Chris Colt hold tight to their tag team title . . . Tony Garea



Lord Al Hayes is now known as Lord Alfred Hayes, says his new manager, notorious Jim Dillon.

hoping to get another shot at Mr. Fugi's version of the U.S. championship . . . Dory Funk Jr. headed to Florida to help brother Terry rid the state of top challengers for Terry's NWA belt . . . Susan Green topping the list of gals most likely to upset Fabulous Moolah . . . Superstar Graham offered a multi-million dollar deal to open his own health food chain . . . Greg Valentine is now under the watchful eye of Playboy Gary Hart. Greg joined Hart's stable and is teaming with The Spoiler on occasion.

Tennessee favorite Tommy Rich is vowing to put Jerry Lawler out of commission.

"I have had all I can take from that bum and his cheatin' manager Sam Bass!" Tommy exploded on a TV interview. "From now on I'll break every rule in the book if I have to just to end Lawler's career. He doesn't deserve to be in such a wonderful sport!"

"He's a jealous ignoramus!" Lawler

blasted. "Sam Bass has never cheated in his life and I have never done anything to Rich to deserve this kind of vicious treatment!"

Young Billy Colt teamed with huge Benny McGuire when Benny's brother, Billy was unable to make the scheduled tag team match. During the battle, for no apparent reason, Colt turned on his partner, joined the opponents and viciously tore Benny's forehead to shreds. Thank goodness Flyin' Fred Curry was nearby. He rescued poor Benny. When our reporter questioned Colt about the incident, he was told to, "Go to hell!"

Jim Dillon has officially become the manager of Lord Al Hayes.

"That's Mr. J.J. Dillon," stated the blond terror. "And you'll also refrain from calling my protege Al Hayes. It is Lord Alfred Hayes." Hayes has been teaming with stablemate The Mongolian Stomper. Together they are giving wrestlers in Dallas and Houston, Texas, a hard time.

Taking up a long-time feud, Ray Stevens is in the sunshine state of Florida to help wipe out Rock Hunter and his army—Pak Song, the Assassin, and The Missouri Mauler.

"Hunter and I have had some bloodbaths in the past," explains Stevens. "Now I'm out to ruin all the good fortune Hunter and his crew have been having." Knowing Stevens' past though, we tend to believe he might wind up befriending Hunter and cash in on his success.

John Tolos has a new tag team partner, popular Mexican rookie Chavo Guerrero. They're chasing the Americas tag team title . . . Scandor Akbar's "Arabian Surfboard" taking its toll on WWF victims . . . Red Bastien and Fritz Von Erich doing tag team duty together . . . Mil Mascaras gracing Texas mats . . . Bad Boy Billy Hines, manager of Bulldog Brower, threw fire at one of Brower's opponents. "A trip to the Middle East was all I needed to learn how to do it," said Hines . . . Killer Krupp clawing St. Louis, Missouri, opponents . . . Billy Robinson negotiating to enter a big tournament in his native Britain. Fear not Florida fans, he'd only be gone a week if he decided to enter the competition!

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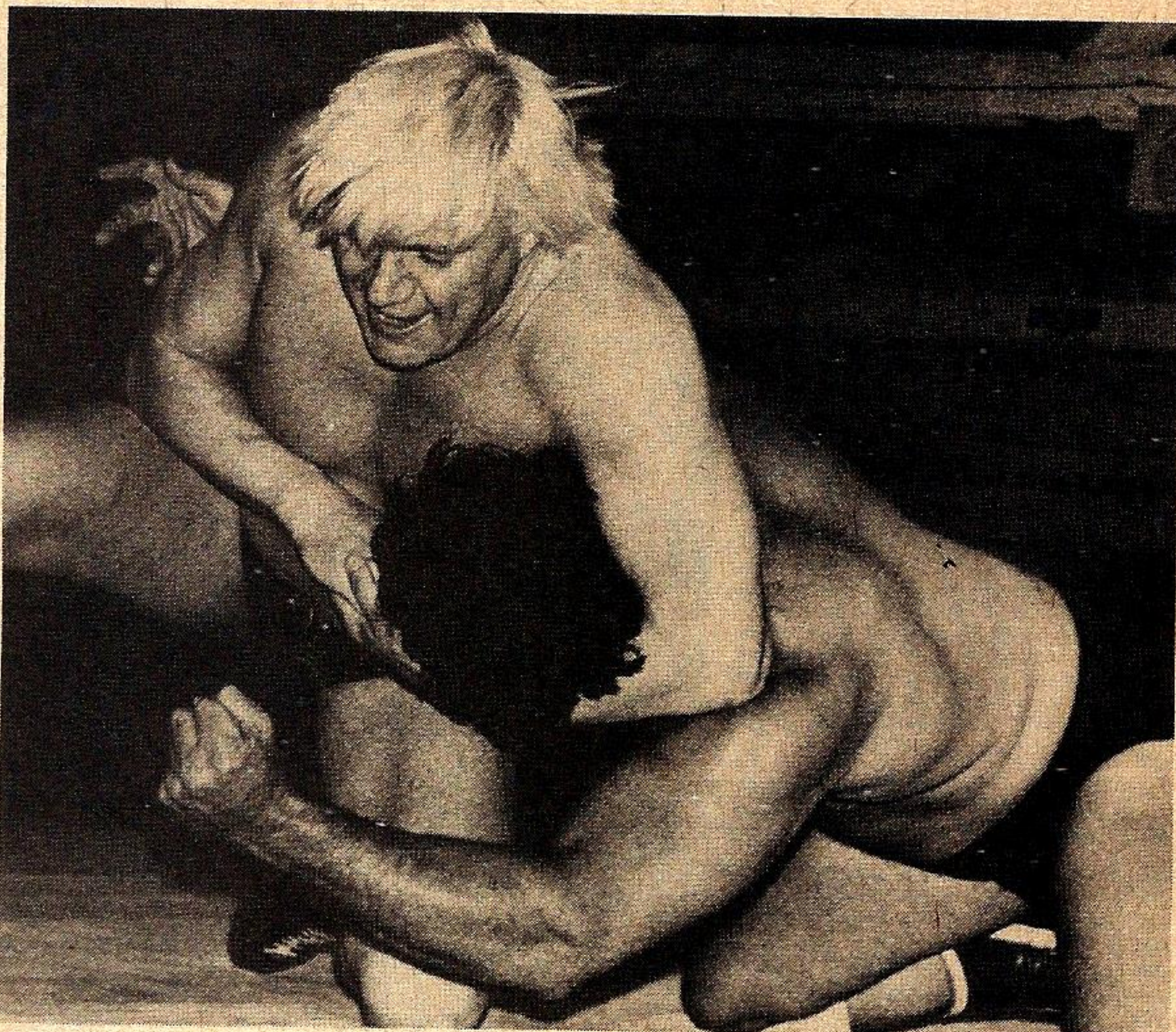
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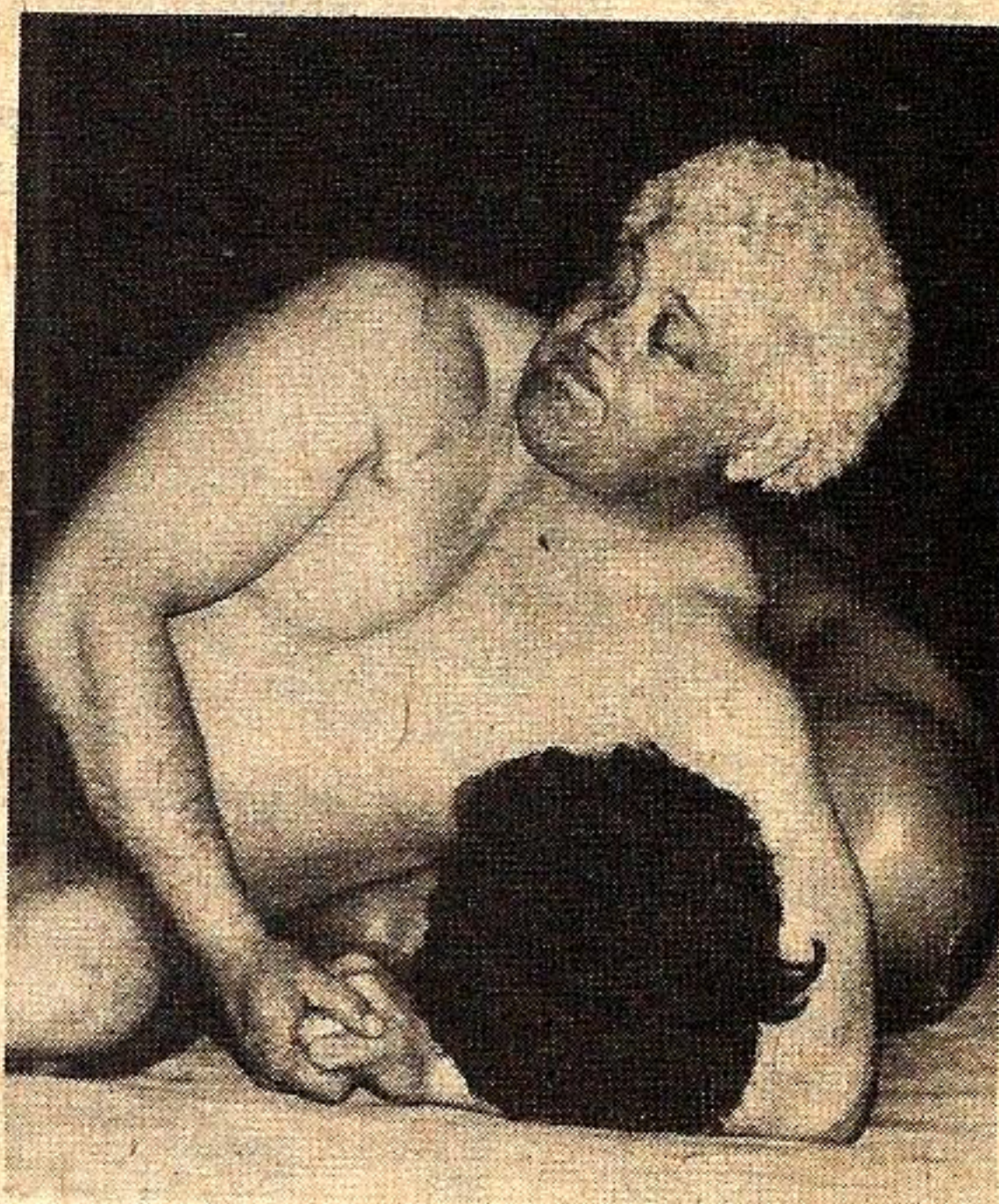
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TOGETHER AGAIN AND BETTER THAN EVER

(Continued from Page 25)



Don Muraco learns why the team of Patterson and Stevens are so feared as he's captured in headlocks by both Patterson (above) and Stevens (below).



mind. He had terrorized the state, dominated the sport. He didn't expect the fans who remembered to forgive him. He didn't care.

Stevens wanted once again to carve a niche for himself in West Coast tag team wrestling. It was a frontier he had to again conquer. Without a challenge, Ray Stevens would shrivel up and die.

When Pat Patterson had written him to once again be tag team partners, Stevens never hesitated. Two days later, he was in San

Francisco, ready to begin training. The pair was hard at work less than an hour after Stevens had arrived.

From the first day, Ray knew he had made the right decision. The rhythm which had made the pair so great in the past was recaptured almost instantly. It was as if they had never been apart. Within two weeks, they were developing new and complex maneuvers. As Ray remembered the excitement of those first weeks, a huge smile involuntarily broke out over his face.

He was walking along Fisherman's Wharf that day because he was to wrestle that night. In the past, he would always visit the wharf before wrestling. It produced the same calming effect on him this day as it had so many times before.

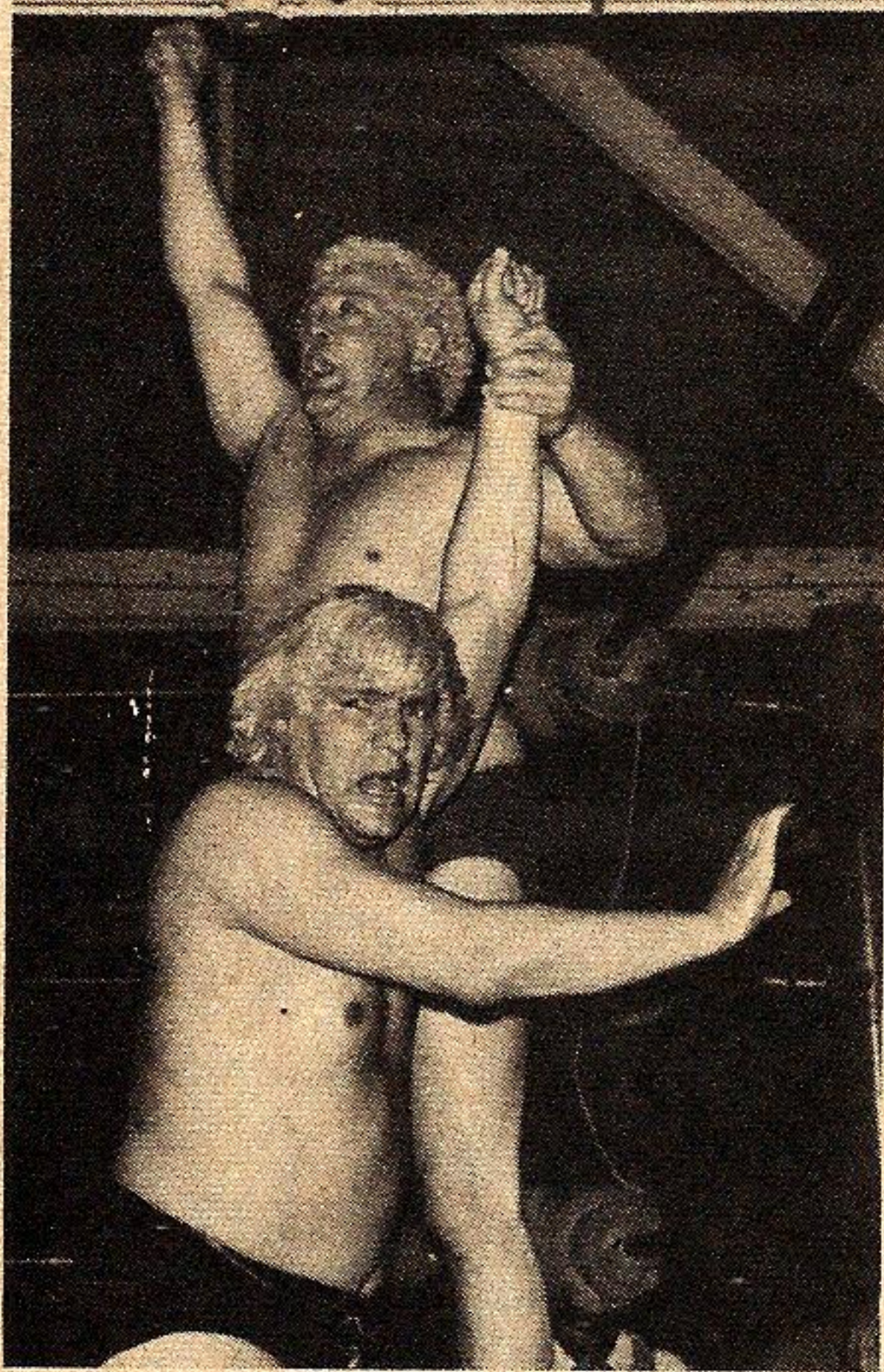
Ray enjoyed the people of the wharf while walking around aimlessly until sunset. Then he rushed to the docks. He wished to see the red sun kiss the water as it sunk into the west. This sight always left him at peace with himself. No matter what the world thought, the sun was on Ray's side.

That night, he and Pat talked of many things as they waited for their match to begin. They didn't discuss strategies or maneuvers. Neither man believed winning maneuvers can be developed in the final

minutes. They were sure of their strategy when they entered the building. There seemed to be no sense changing anything under the influence of pre-bout nerves.

With relentless professionalism, Stevens and Patterson emerged victorious. They couldn't be bested with legal moves; illegal moves didn't faze them. They had decided to win before the match had begun and nothing happened to make them change that decision.

After their victory, Stevens and Patterson didn't celebrate wildly. With a craftsman's pride in their work, they sat back and relaxed.



A weary pair exultantly raise their arms in victory after yet another team has fallen before their awesome assault!

They had battled well. They expected it of themselves and weren't disappointed.

"This is what I was meant to do," Patterson admitted after the match, "wrestle on a team with a great veteran. It's the special feeling you get when everything works. There's a special kick you get when a machine works perfectly. That's the thrill I get with this team."

"I'm excited about wrestling," Ray declared, "because we're doing something extraordinary. We're setting the standard against which other teams will be judged. I can't wait to train and then go into combat. A day off is a torture!"

The other tag teams in California wish Ray would torture himself much more often. □

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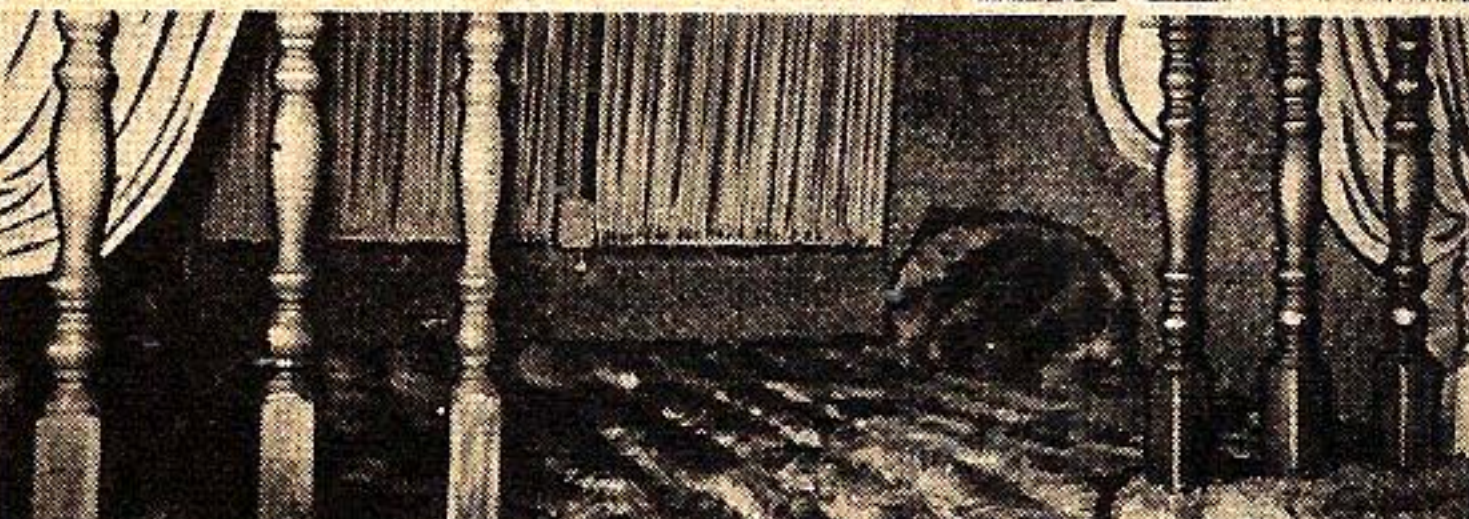
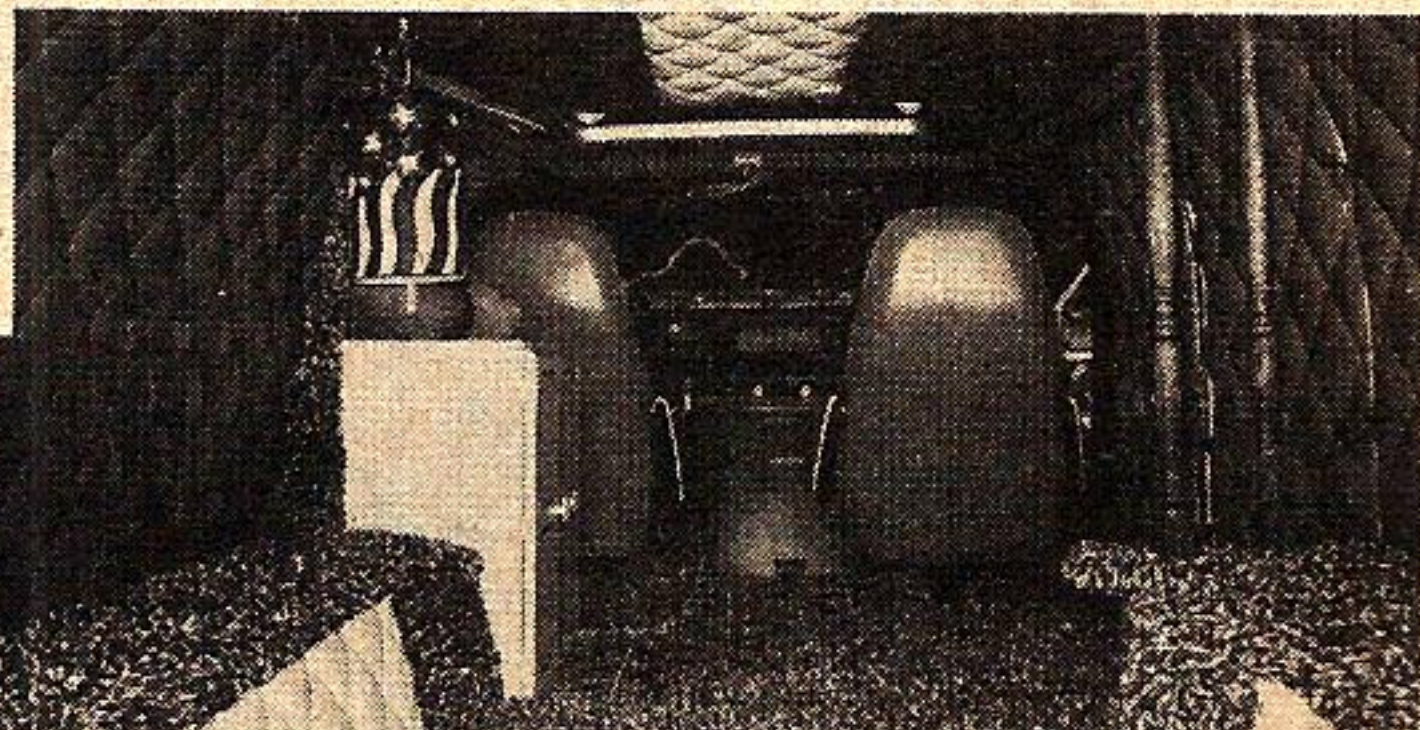


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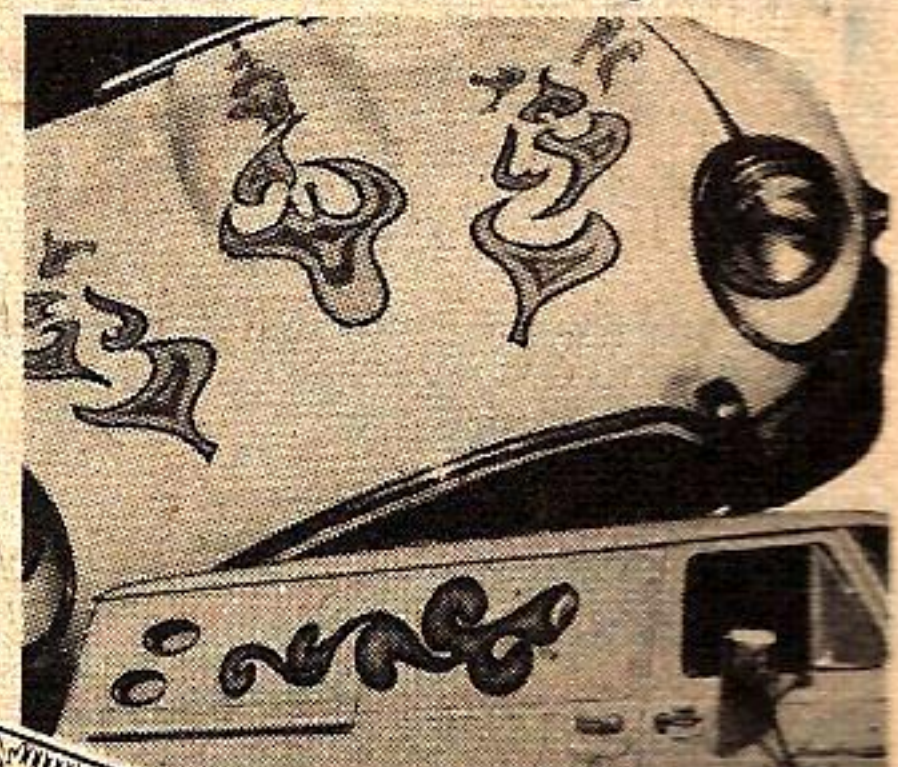
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DUSTY RHODES

(Continued from Page 28)

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While a member of the hated Outlaws with Dick Murdoch (above) Rhodes earned a reputation as a cruel battler.

However, Dusty changed his ways to battle men like King Curtis (right) and team with Superstar Billy Graham (below).

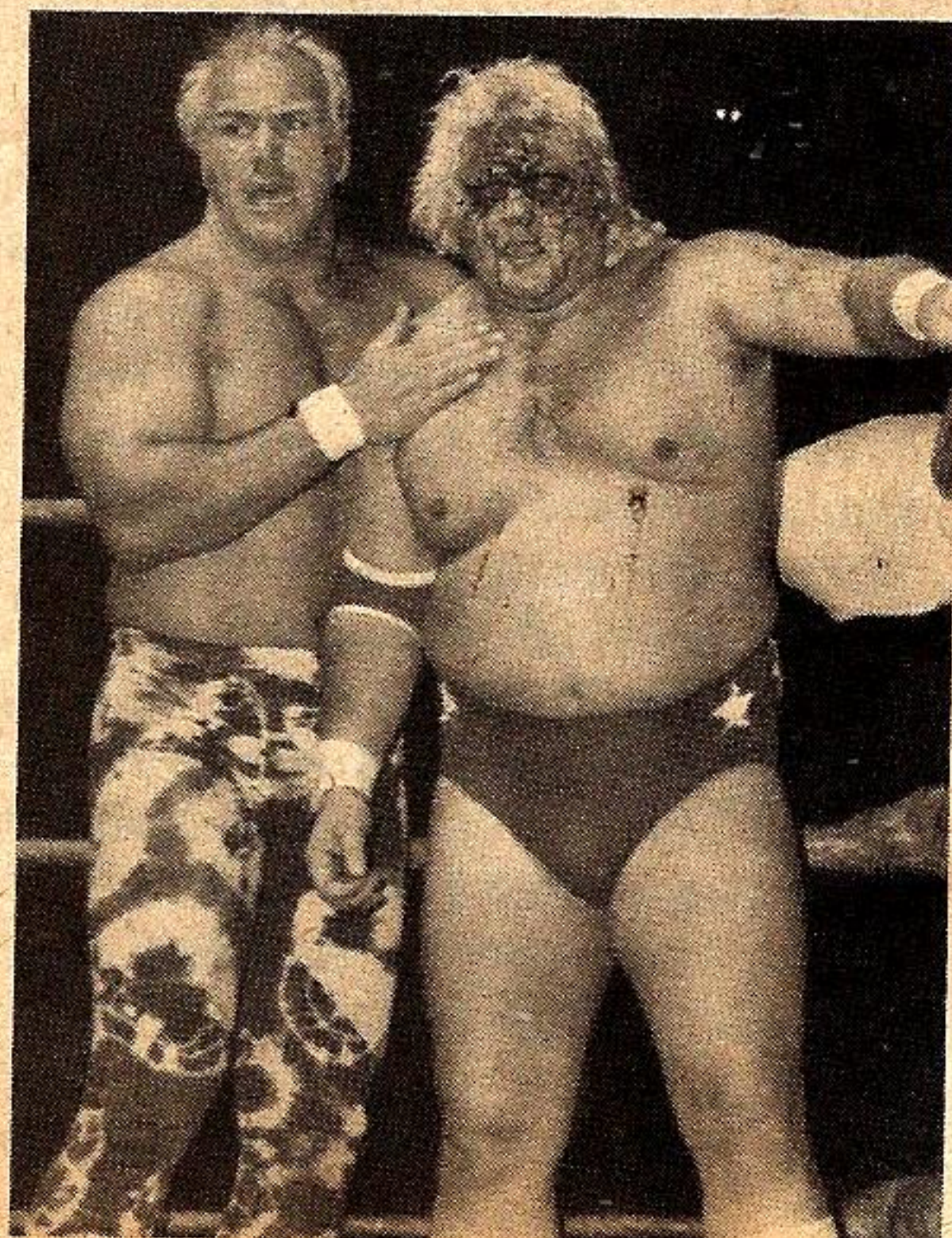
going back up.' At that moment, I decided to change my tactics."

Dusty paused a moment, his eyes clouding over. He was looking back at a past which obviously pained him. There are things in every man's life which he regrets. Dusty had the misfortune of doing them in public.

"I realized," Dusty continued, "that to make up for my past, I had to show the world how truly I'd changed. I gave my entire being over to winning the fans. I thought I would try to do what they would like and I did it. I talked to them, asking what I could do to make amends. And they told me.

"The fans want one champion over all—the three major titles only bring about unwanted controversy. They also want a man they can look up to, someone who'll fight their battles for them. They want to see the rulebreakers driven out by a man they can trust. I knew I had to prove they could trust me.

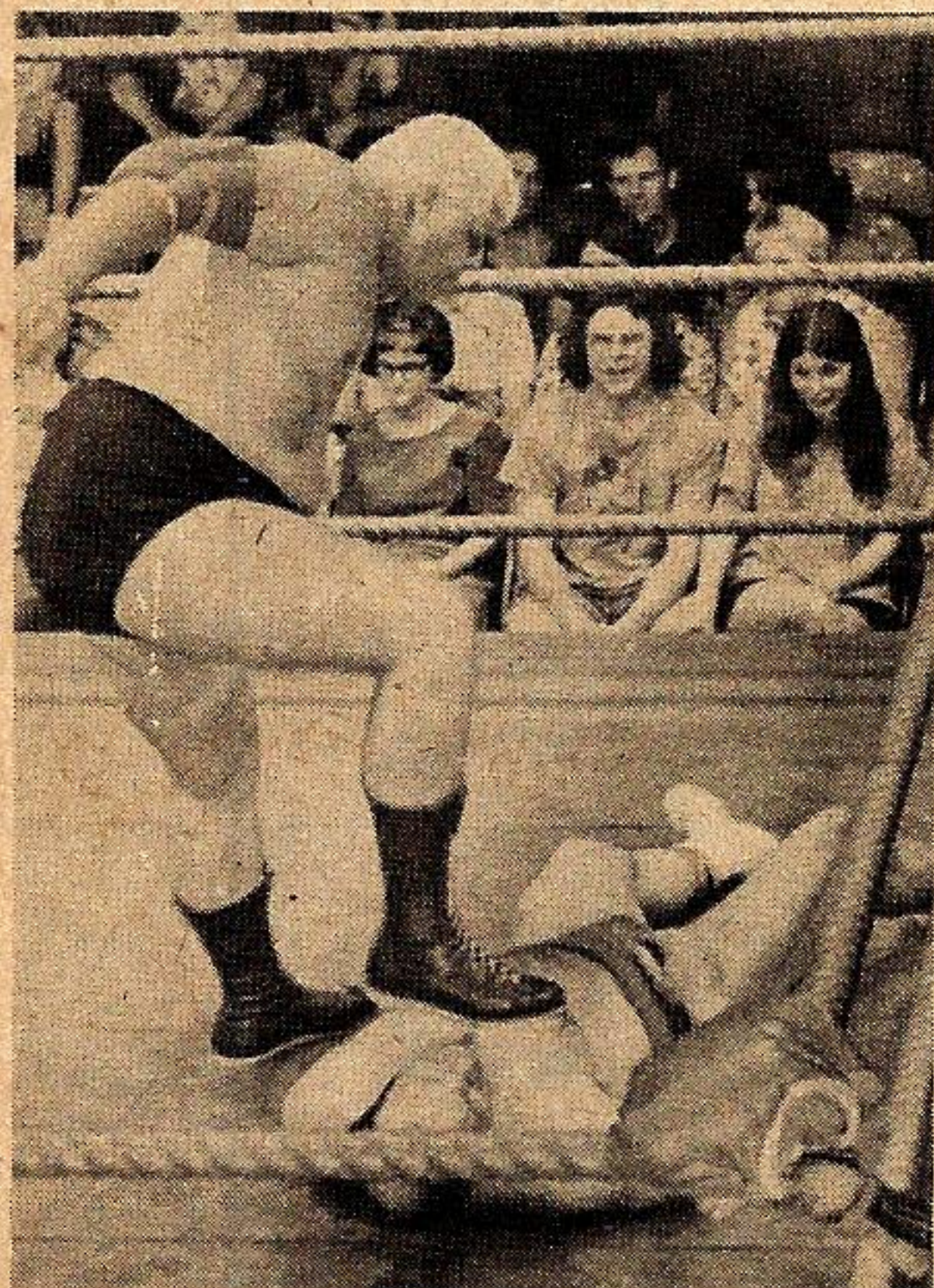
"From the very first match after I changed, the fans knew they could trust me. I was battered and bloody, but I won. I've since braved every rule-



breaker in the world. I've been sliced up, gored, kicked, beaten, and punched. I've had enough stitches to make a quilt. There are many scars I'll wear for the rest of my life. But it's been worth it!

I'll continue to take the punishment if it means pleasing the fans and eventually winning the title. That's all I really care about. I want the fans to be proud of me, to be proud of the one true champion. All the agony in the world won't stop me!

"All I ask," Dusty concluded, "is that the fans trust me. If I ever betray them, they can do anything they want to me. I won't ask for a second chance to prove myself. But please accept what exists: a man who risks his life for the love of the fans. Their cheers are all



Dusty stomps on Treach Phillips (above) during the bad old days. Rhodes turned fan favorite soon after this photo was snapped.

I ask in return."

For some, whatever Dusty says will mean little. What he does will only mean a little more, but not enough to convince them. They believe sooner or later Rhodes will tire of being bloodied by men who were once his friends. They see Dusty betraying the fans and going back to his rulebreaking ways.

The vast majority of fans will stay by Dusty. They believe what they see and are willing to trust the man who has promised to be their champion. They love him with a dedication few athletes have ever enjoyed. It will take an incredible act of cruelty for Dusty's fans to turn on him.

Yet, no one can predict what the future holds for Dusty Rhodes. All they can do is hope. □

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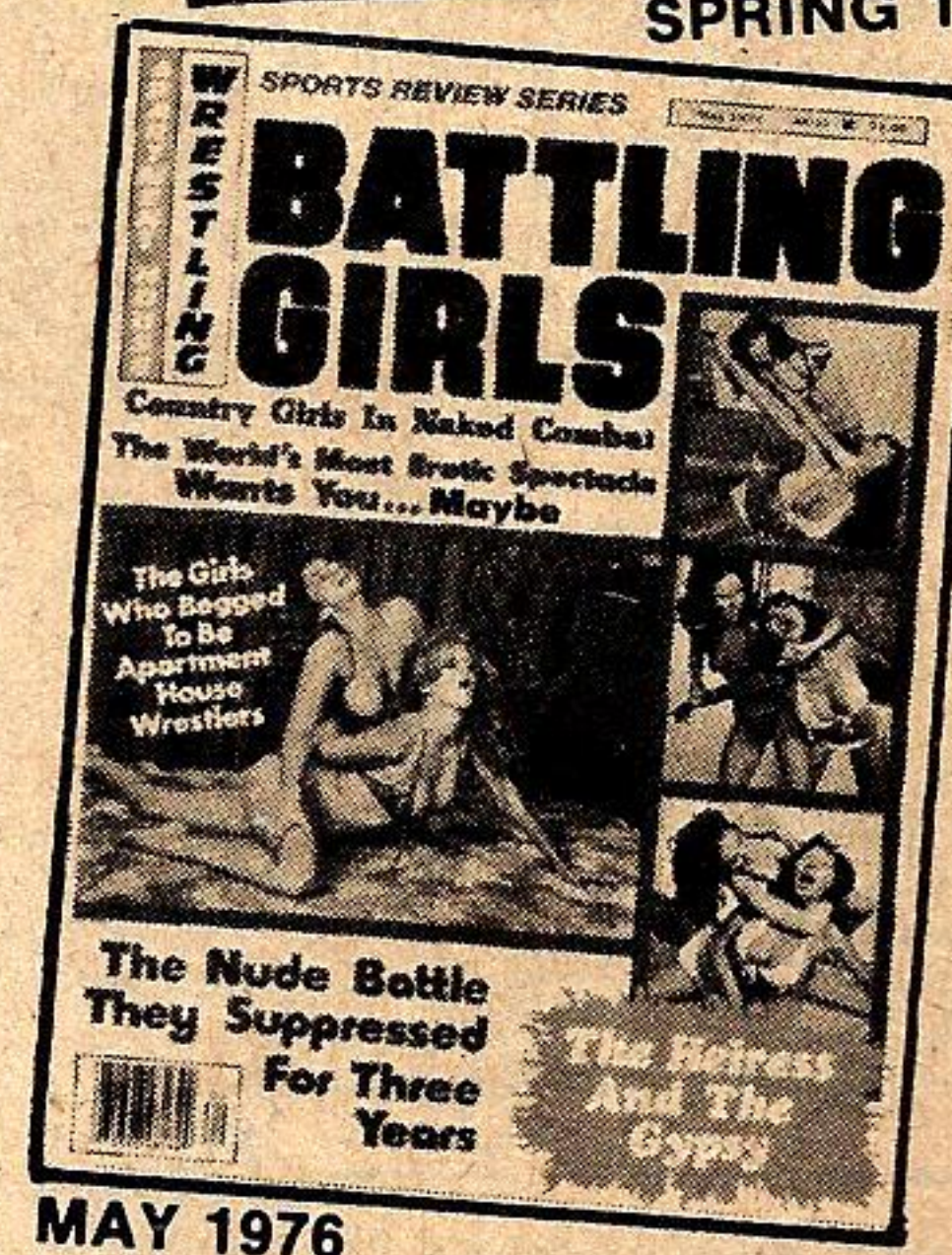
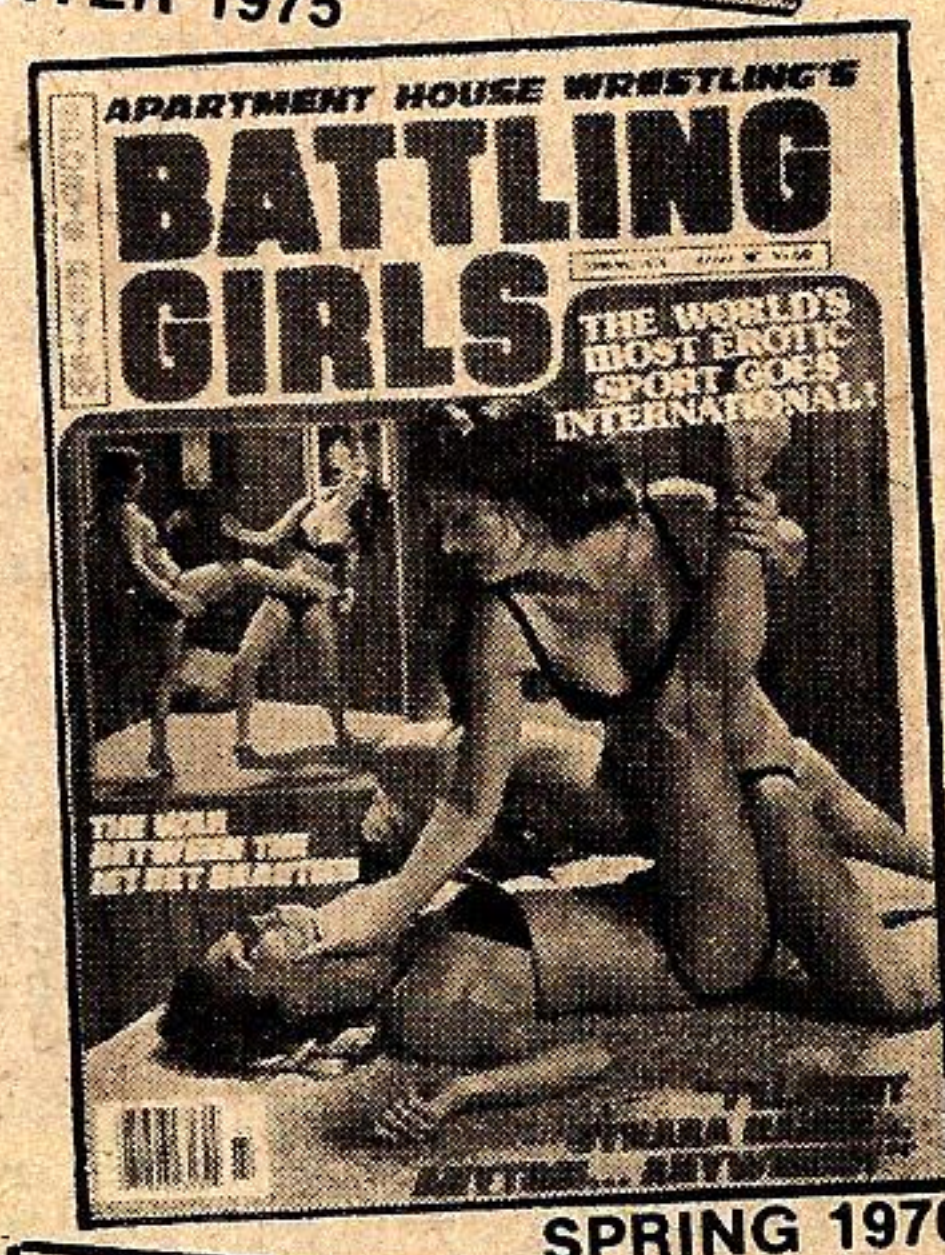
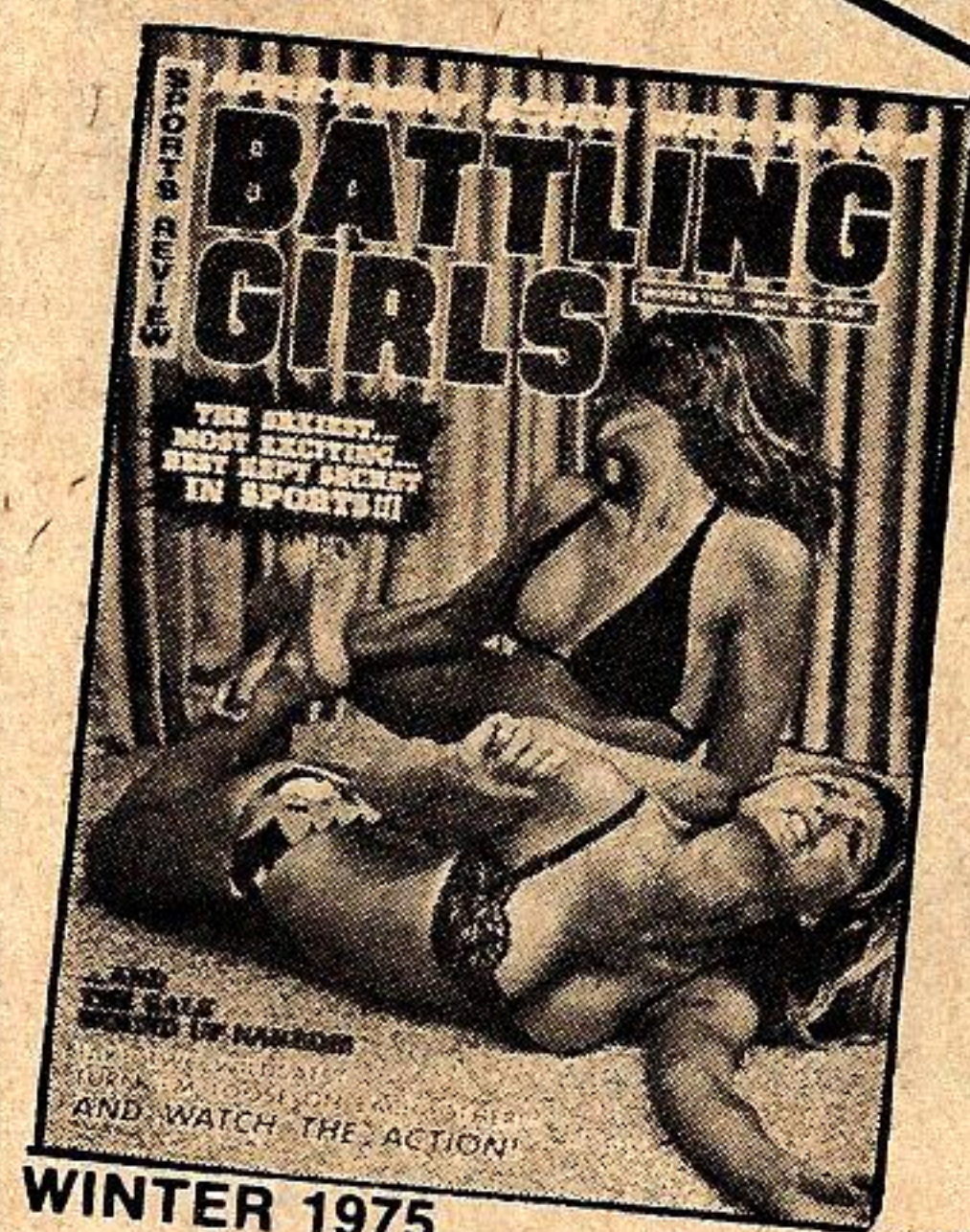
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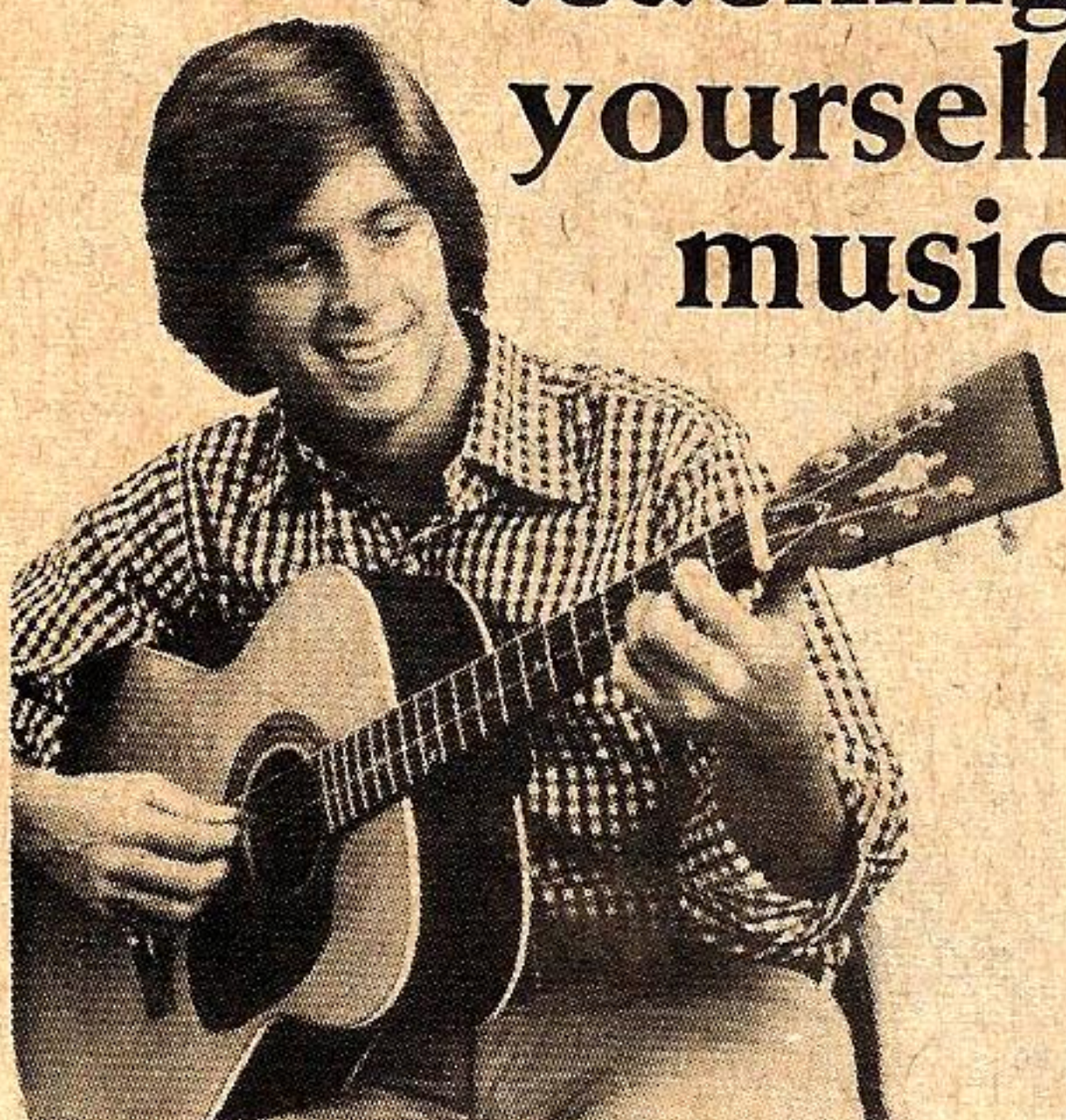
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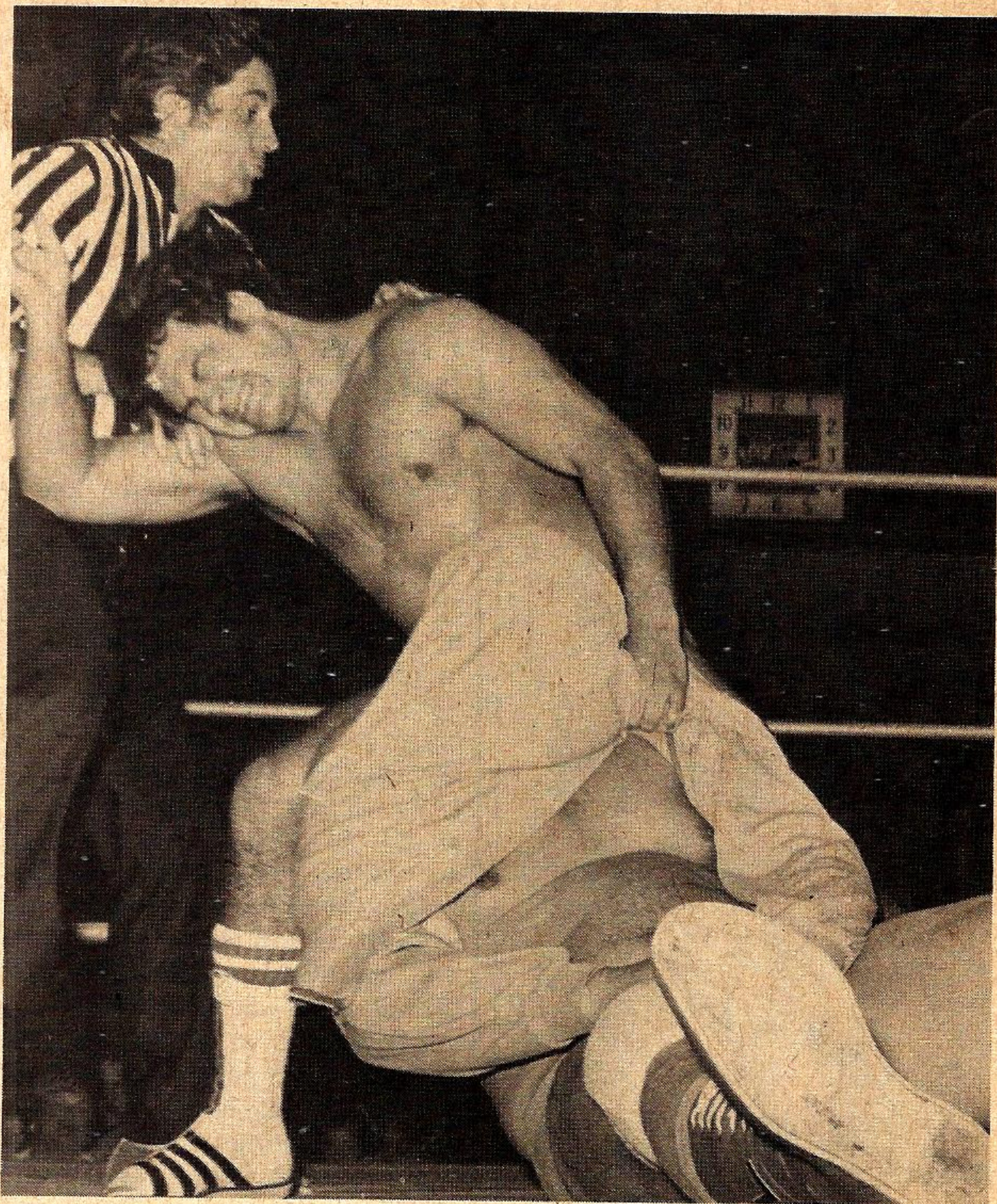
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CHAVO GETS HIS SWEET REVENGE

(Continued from Page 31)



The referee tries to pull the warring Chavo off his victim but he might as well try to stop the tide. Chavo will release Ernie Ladd only when the revenge his soul demands has been fully satisfied.

father, walked proudly into the arena. Thousands of fans cheered their approval for the young Mexican rookie. Then Ernie strutted into the arena. The fans greeted his arrival with loud and prolonged boos.

The two men stepped inside the ropes. Ernie was still waving to the audience, smiling proudly. Suddenly, he felt a tug at his jacket. The next thing he knew, Chavo had knocked him to the canvas.

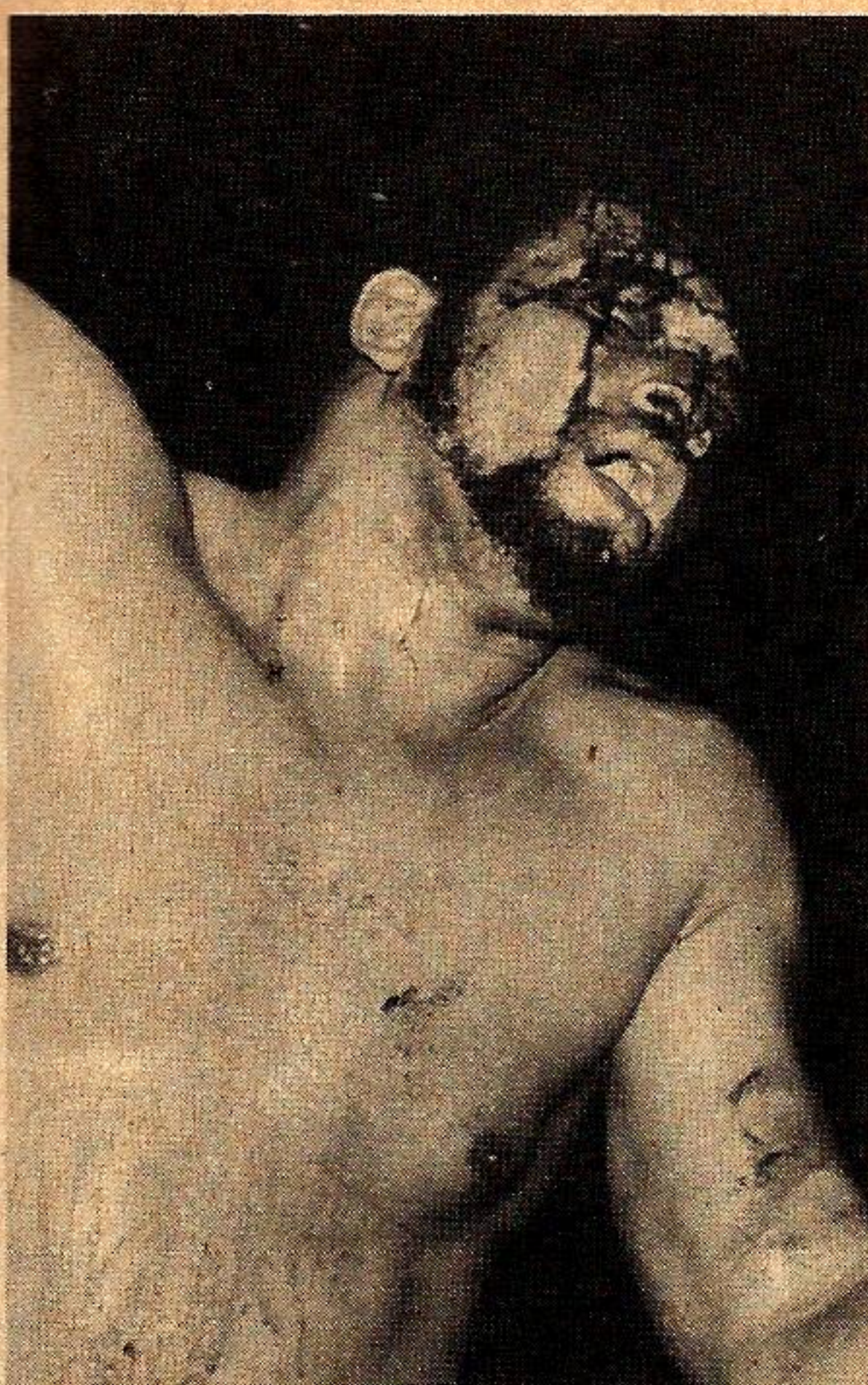
With Ladd laying prone on the mat, Guerrero made his move. He took Ernie's jacket, and pulled it over Ernie's head. Ladd could not see. To make matters worse, Chavo had tied the jacket in such a way it was impossible for Ernie to remove it!

Chavo proceeded to pound away at Ernie, showing no mercy at all for the

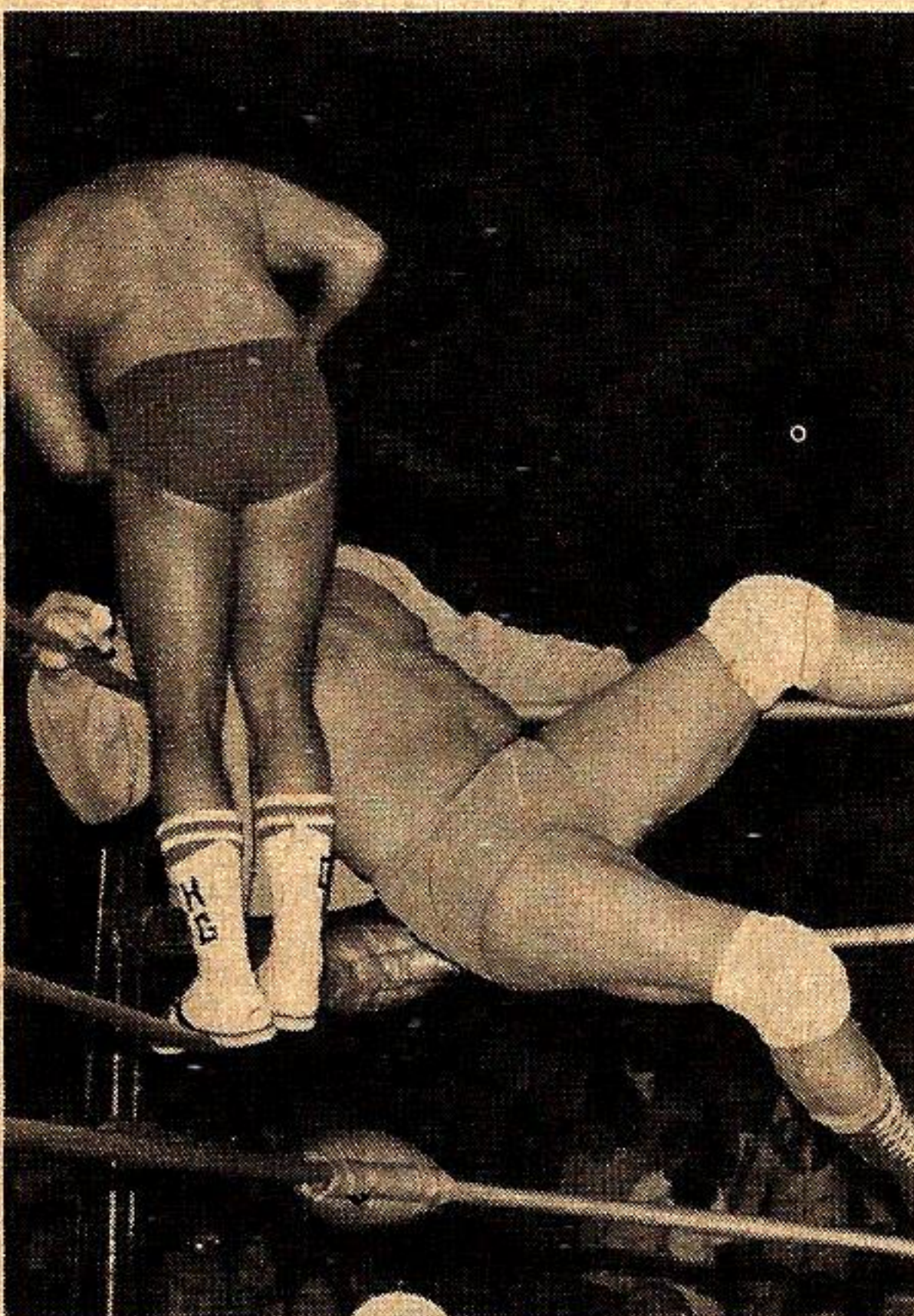
blinded "Big Cat." If it was revenge he had wished, he had received it. Gory turned his back on the action. He was ashamed and disgusted by his son's actions in the ring. Yet Chavo kept pounding away at Ladd, slamming the King of Wrestling around the ring without mercy. It was a vicious, cruel assault, one Chavo Guerrero should never have done.

The referee stepped in and disqualified Chavo, even though the match had yet to officially begin. Ladd was untied from his straightjacket and walked quickly back to the dressing room.

Chavo was satisfied by the revenge he had exacted that night. The thousands of spectators applauded his efforts over Ladd, a wrestler they had never liked. Though the fans were not



Above: A bloody Ladd stumbles around the ring. Below: As Ladd gets caught in the ropes, Chavo keeps up the punishment.



used to Chavo employing less-than-legal tactics on opponents, they understood the reason for the assault.

But Chavo still had to face his father. The young man had pledged to his father before the match he would only use illegal tactics if the events necessitated it. But it had been Chavo who had sneak-attacked Ladd. Gory told his son he was ashamed over what had happened.

However, Gory also realized this was a moral victory for his son, and therefore he had to forgive Chavo. For young Chavo Guerrero, the satisfaction was now complete. □

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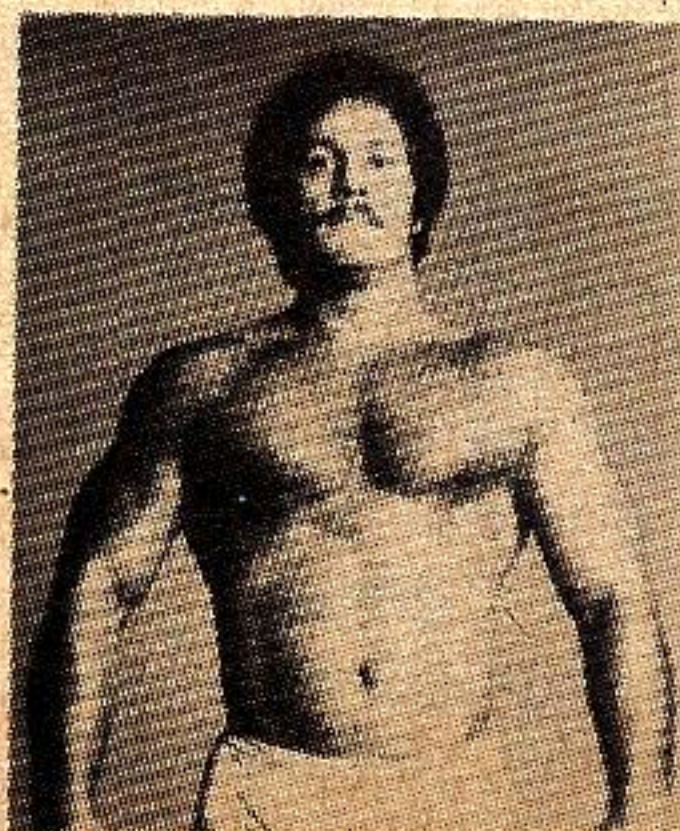
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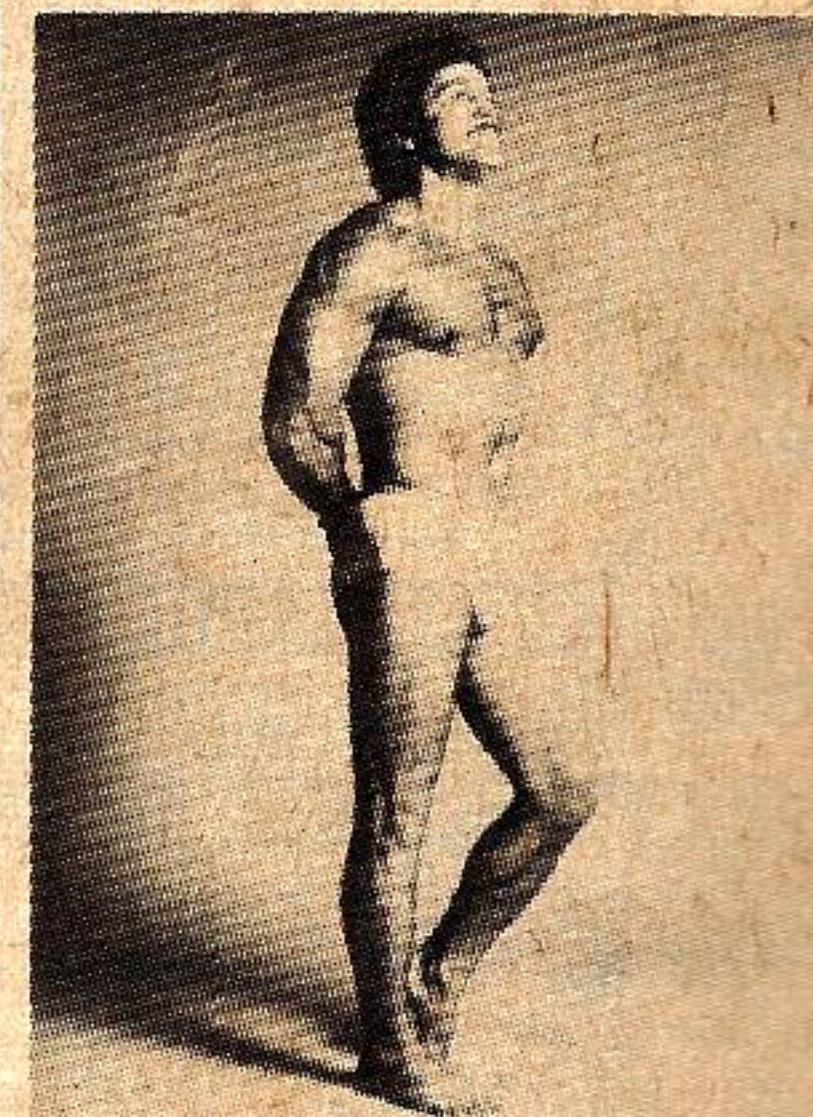
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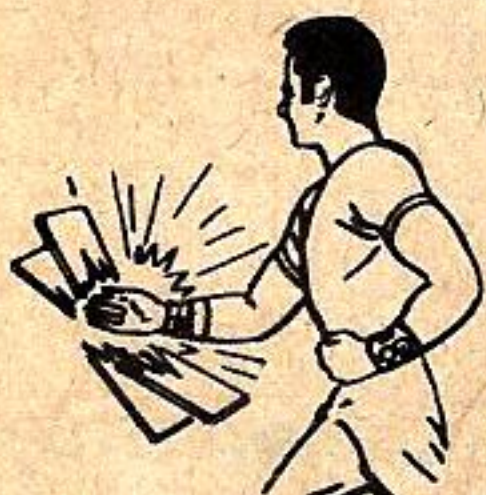
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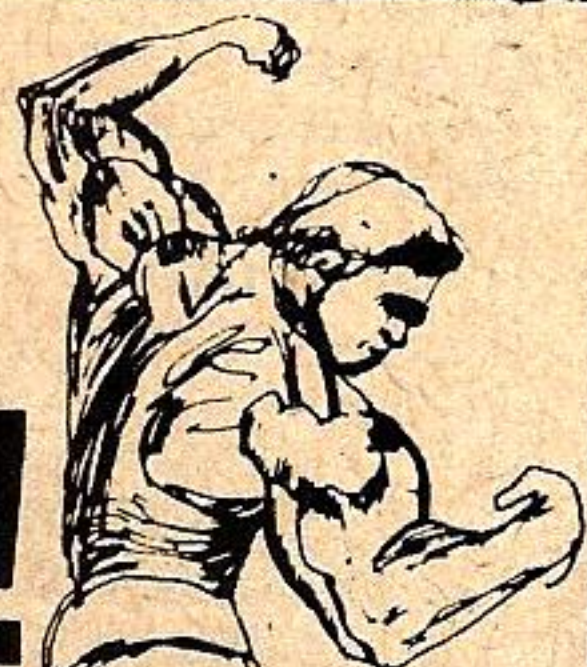
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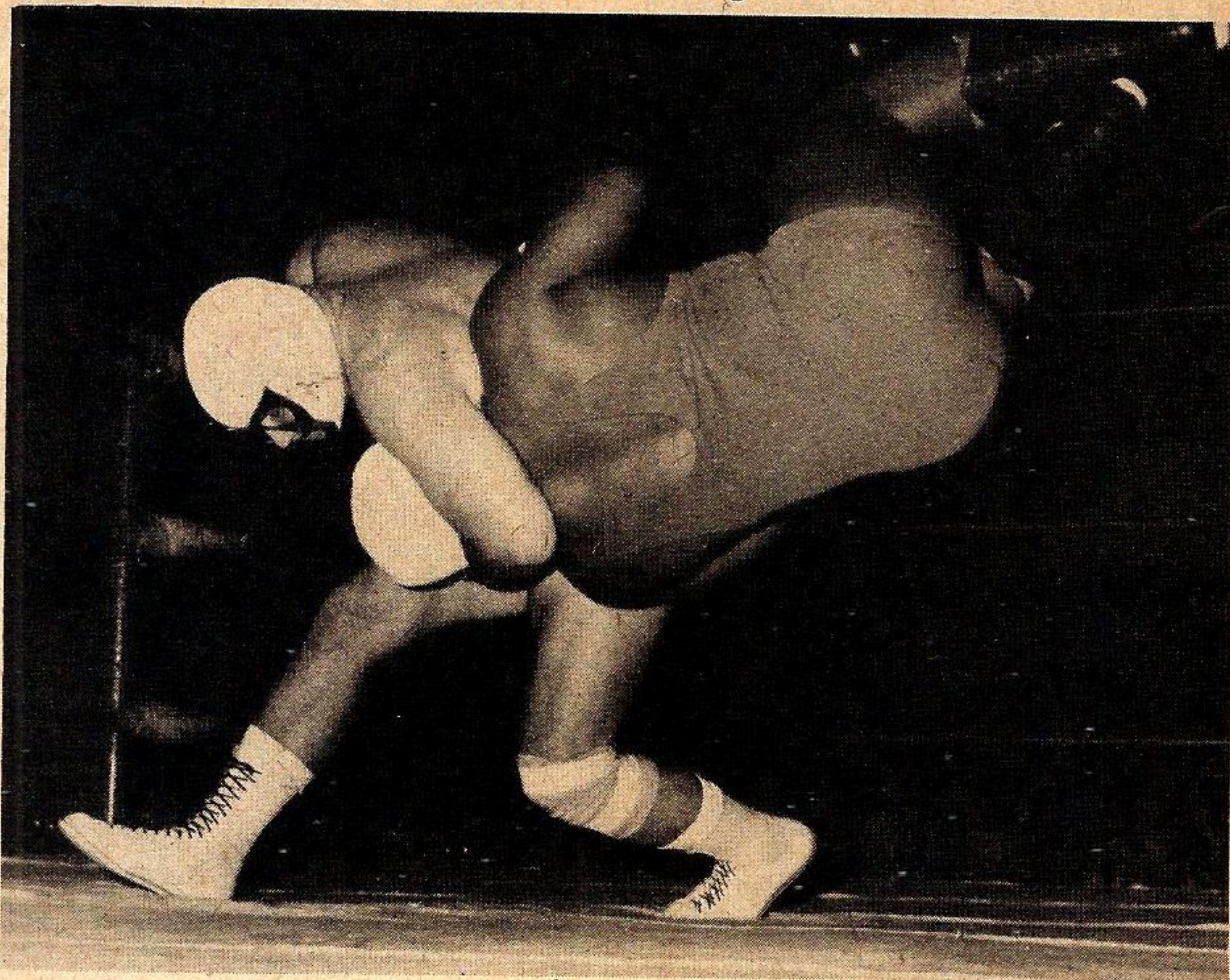


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YOU ASKED US

(Continued from Page 18)



Mr. Wrestling II has another masked wrestler, the Black Crusader, sailing through the air. Mr. Wrestling II hasn't been unmasked yet, despite the attempts by many wrestlers to reveal his identity.

Q: Has Mr. Wrestling II ever been unmasked and has he ever unmasked anyone?—Todd Ellerbe, Fort Valley, Georgia

A: "I have never been unmasked," said the popular masked man "And I don't recall ever unmasking anyone either."

Q: Why did Pak Song leave Gary Hart's army and join the army of Rock Hunter?—Jack Liddle, Miami, Florida

A: Hart's army is presently based in Georgia. Song, contracted to wrestle in Florida, trusts Hunter as much as he trusts Hart. Don't doubt for a moment though he won't return to Hart's army. He will one day.

Q: What recent match has Jack Brisco considered one of his classics?—Larry Tensend, Toronto, Ontario

A: "I wrestled Billy Robinson in Florida recently," said Brisco. "We exchanged hold after hold for an hour, ending up in a time limit draw. It's a match I'll always consider one of my finest."

Q: Who was the original manager of the original Fabulous Kangaroos (Al Costello and Roy Heffernan)?—Kelly O'Shea, Minneapolis, Minnesota

A: Wild Red Berry was The Kan-

garoos' first guiding light.

Q: Did Roddy Piper steal the nickname "The Lean Mean Machine" from AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel?—Grace Lambert, San Francisco, California

A: "Hell no!" Piper exclaimed. "If anyone stole that name, it was Bockwinkel!"

Q: Has anyone been able to thoroughly beat The Mongolian Stomper?—Sammy Leiberfield, Seattle, Washington

A: "Of course not!" exploded Stomper's manager Jim Dillon. "We have stomped out Jose Lothario, Wahoo McDaniel and other men you think are top challengers. And now there is almost no more talent to be found. We may have to retire undefeated."

Q: I saw Superstar Graham kick the table out from Ivan Putski when they had an arm-wrestling contest. I'll bet he denies it!—Frank Poffenderic, Stamford, Connecticut

A: "How can I deny it?" asked Graham. "Sure it happened. But you've got it all wrong. Putski kicked the table out, not me. I am a fine outstanding citizen and wouldn't stoop to anything that low!" □

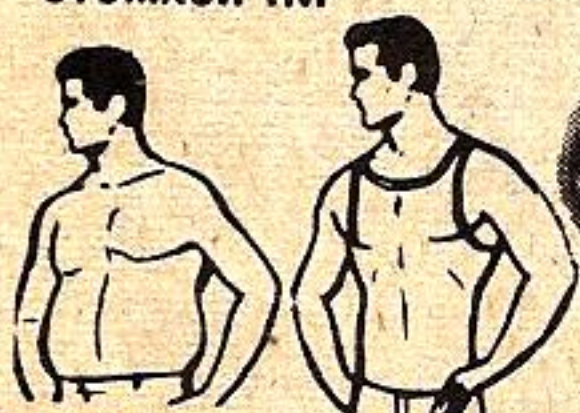
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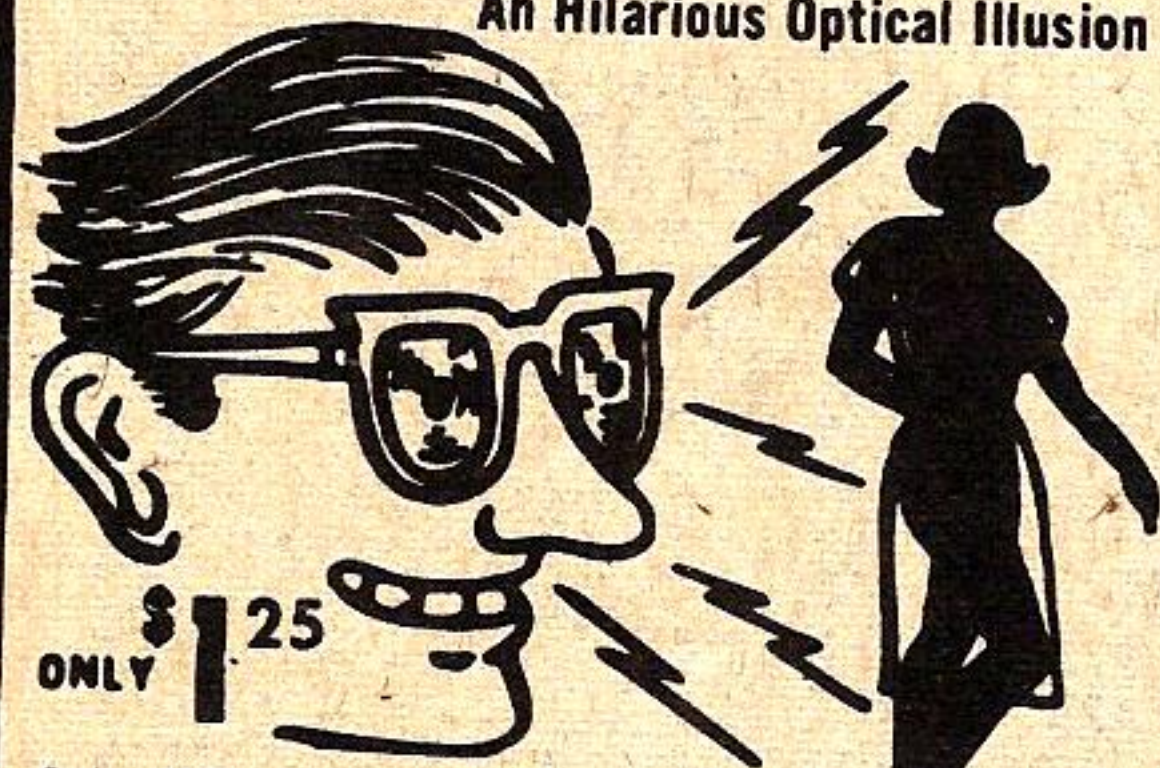
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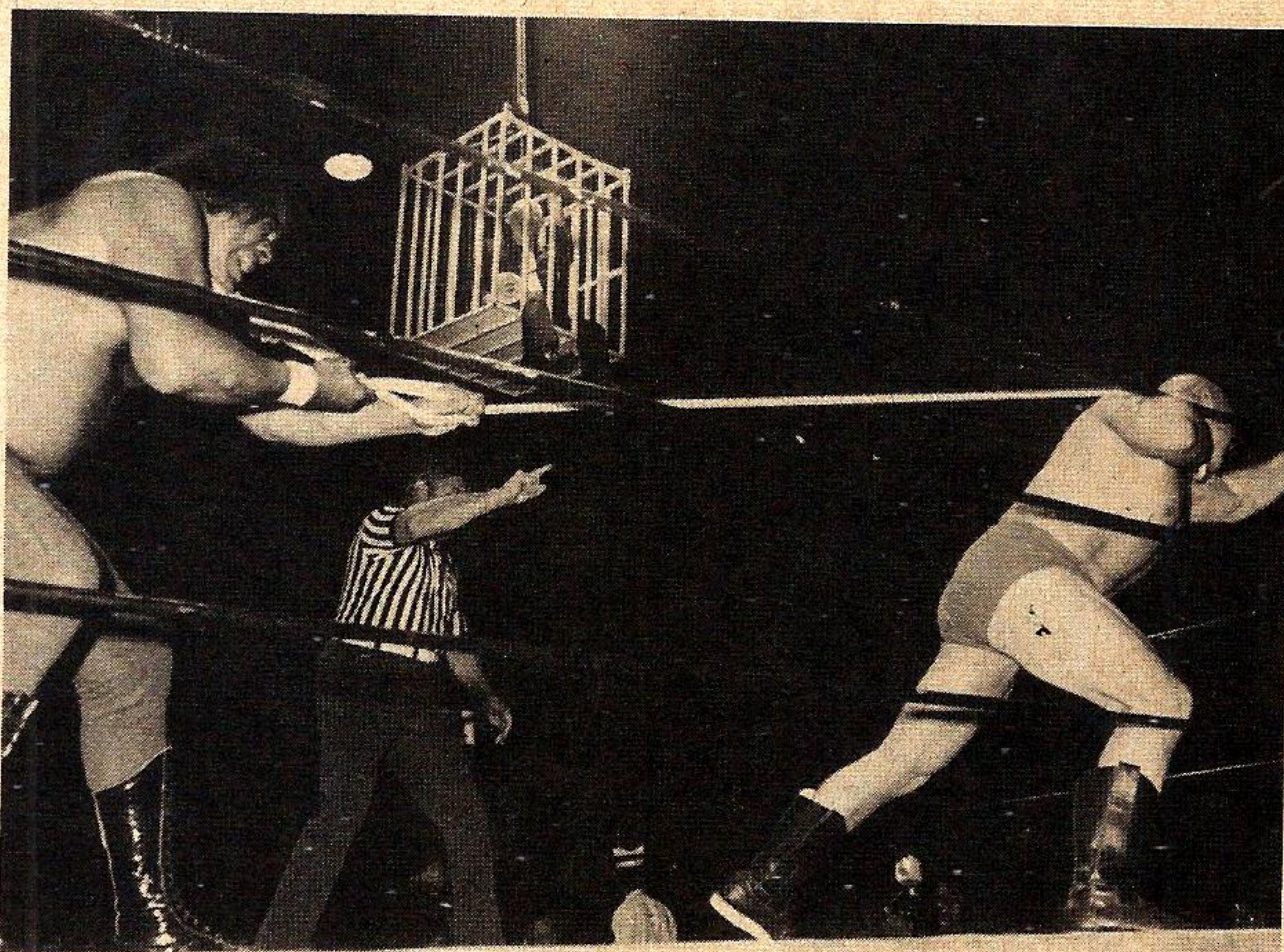
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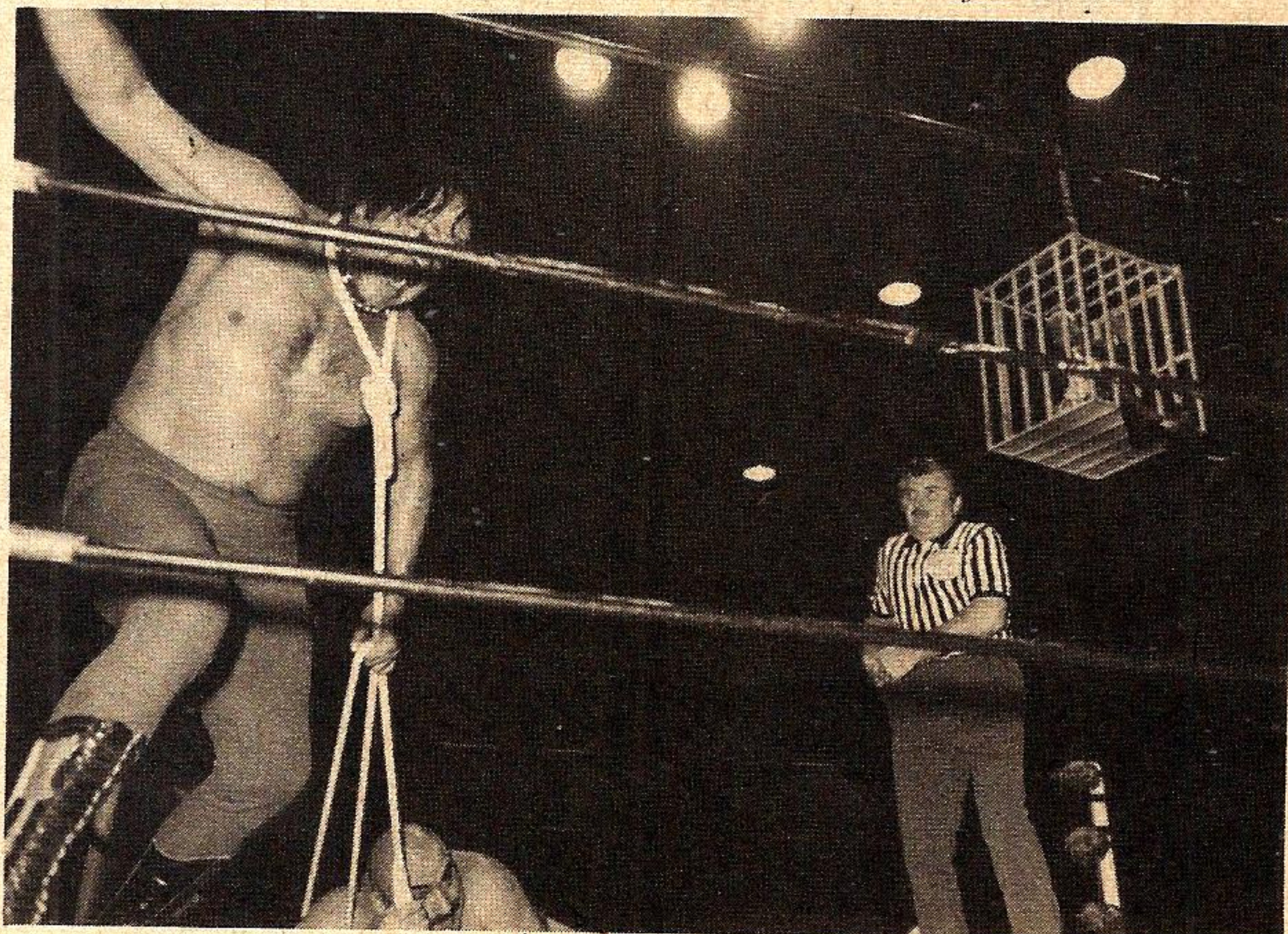
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JOSE LOTHARIO

(Continued from Page 32)



It takes all of Lothario's strength and courage to stop Stomper from dragging him around the ring to defeat (above). After an incredible struggle of Herculean proportions, Lothario weakens Stomper sufficiently to drag him around the ring (below). The caged Dillon could do nothing but scream in wild frustration.



to his credit, wanted nothing to do with it. However, Jose Lothario had been desperate to battle Mongolian Stomper. Dillon, Stomper's manager, had a contract in which Lothario promised to wrestle Stomper in any kind of match. The promoter had no choice but to accept the match for his arena.

When Lothario's friends heard of this match, they begged Jose to withdraw. They declared no man had to

subject himself to this kind of lawless brawl. Jose seemed to be the only one who believed the match must be battled.

"A contract is a contract," Jose said simply. "I signed it and I'll live up to it."

"Also, it's probably the only chance I'll get to wrestle Stomper. The fans deserve to have that guy run out of the area. I seem to be the man who has to do it. I have a responsibility to the fans. Stomper is a blight on wrestling.

Dillon may be the most savage manager ever. If I can show them they can't ride roughshod over the association, then I can feel justified as a professional athlete.

"Personally, I think the idea of a lynch match is disgusting. But still, I have no choice."

However, the promoter did everything in his power to protect Jose. The most important thing he did was to construct a heavy steel cage in which Dillon would have to view the match. Jim would have a birds-eye-view of the battle. The cage was to be suspended high above the ring. There would be no interference from Dillon in this match!

Jim squealed like a stuck pig as they raised the cage. He continued to scream angrily throughout the contest. He was to discover his words were powerless.

Once Dillon was out of the picture, the referee slipped the nooses over each man's head. They were joined together by a thick, coarse rope. They would be separated only after one man suffered an agonizing defeat.

The bell rang; the match began. The men tried to use the rope as a whip to trip each other. They stumbled closer together and then locked. It was here Stomper showed how much strategy he and Dillon had devised.

It was horrible to watch. Stomper used the rope to aid in his illegal tactics. Jose learned the agony of rope torn across flesh. Stomper even tried to use the rope to gouge out Lothario's eyes. If he had been successful, Jose would be blind today.

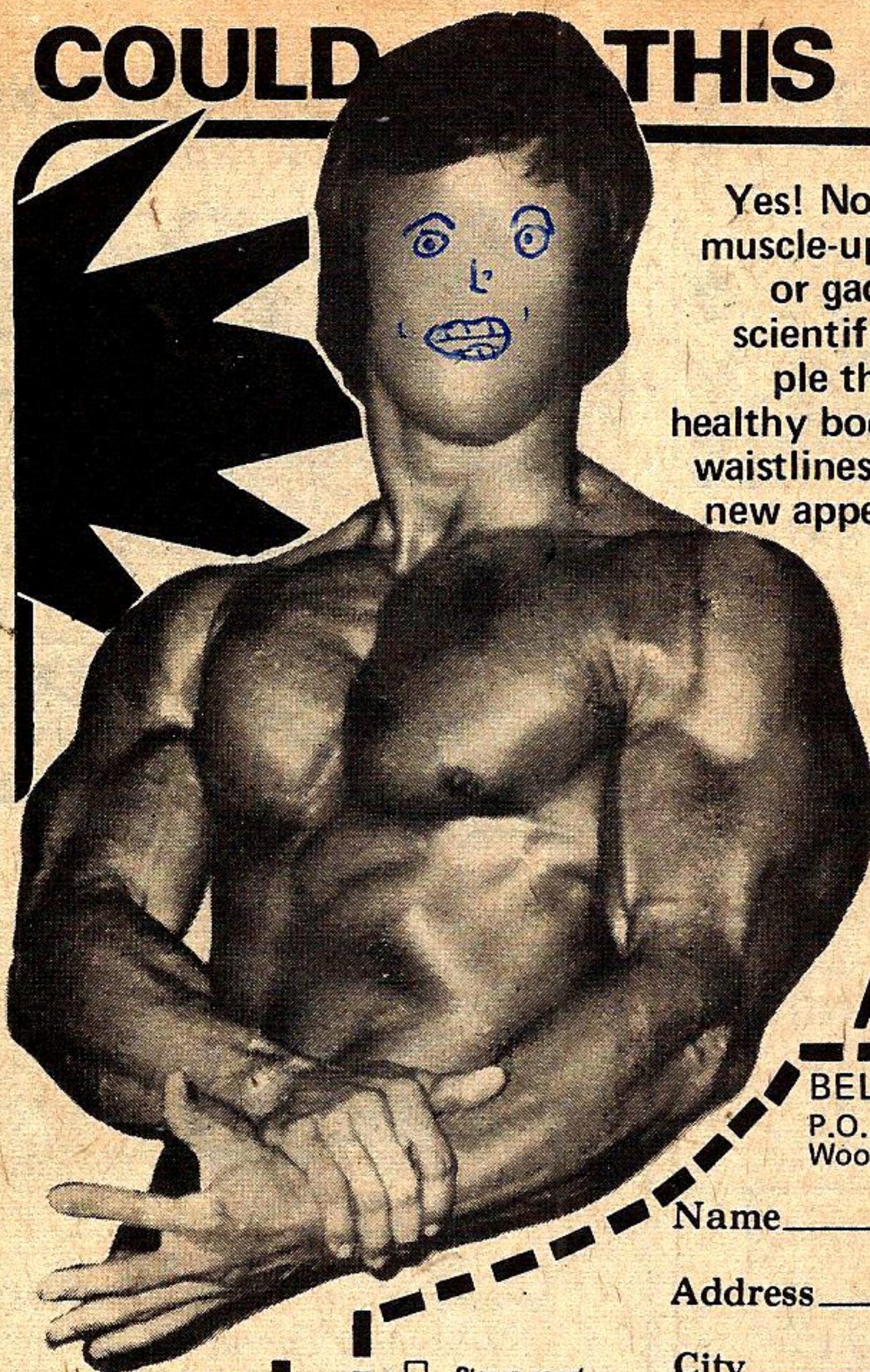
Most men would have surrendered after this kind of beating. Yet it only strengthened Jose's determination to conquer. Somehow, with skill and courage known only to the great, he reversed the match around. Slowly but surely, he dominated the action. Finally, Stomper was weakened beyond hope. Then Jose started his journey around the ring.

Stomper gagged from being choked as Jose touched the first turnbuckle, then the second, the third, and despite a last second attempt by Stomper to escape, Jose grabbed at the fourth. The match was over. The Mongolian Stomper, defeated, lay gagging on the canvas.

Dillon was lowered from his cage and freed. He rushed to his injured wrestler's side. Lothario looked at the pathetic pair, proud of his victory. The sport he loves had been vindicated.

As Jose Lothario left the arena, the crowd gave him a standing ovation. □

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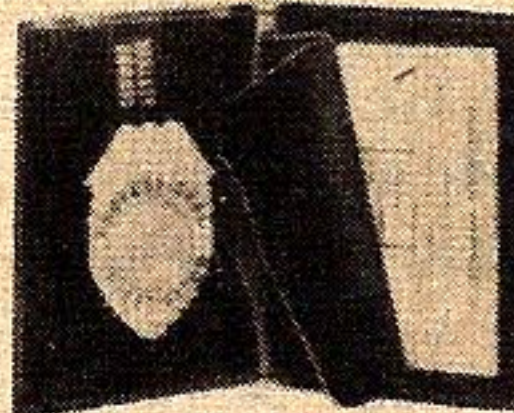


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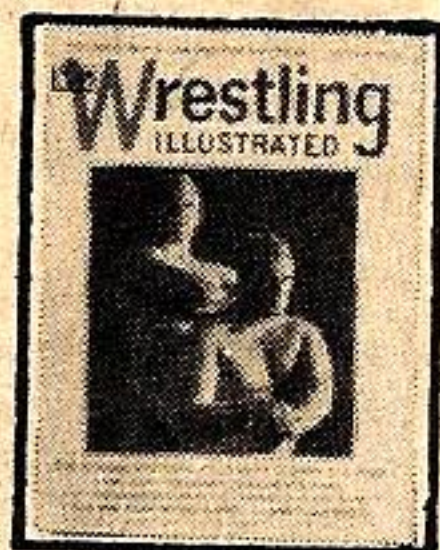
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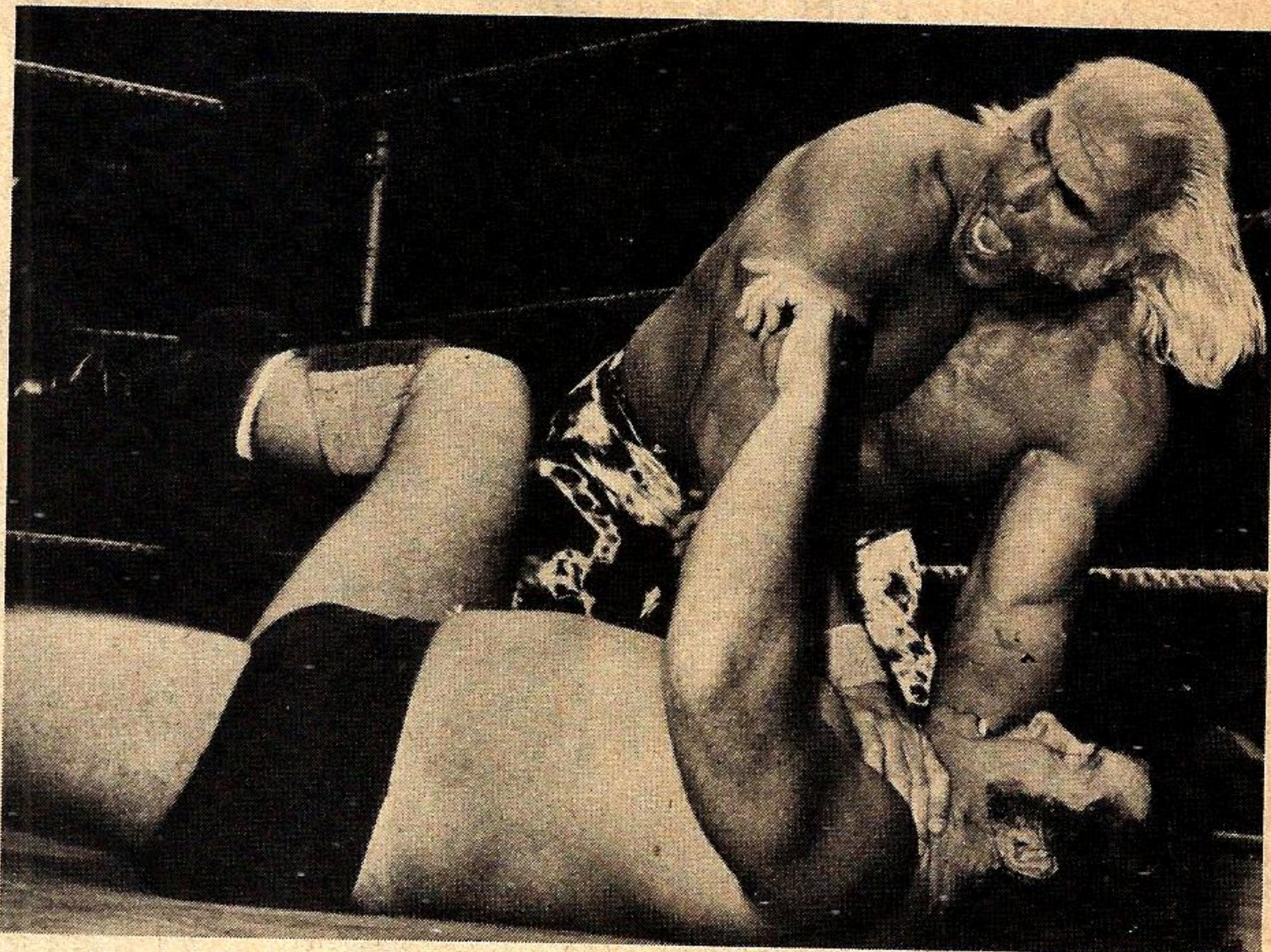
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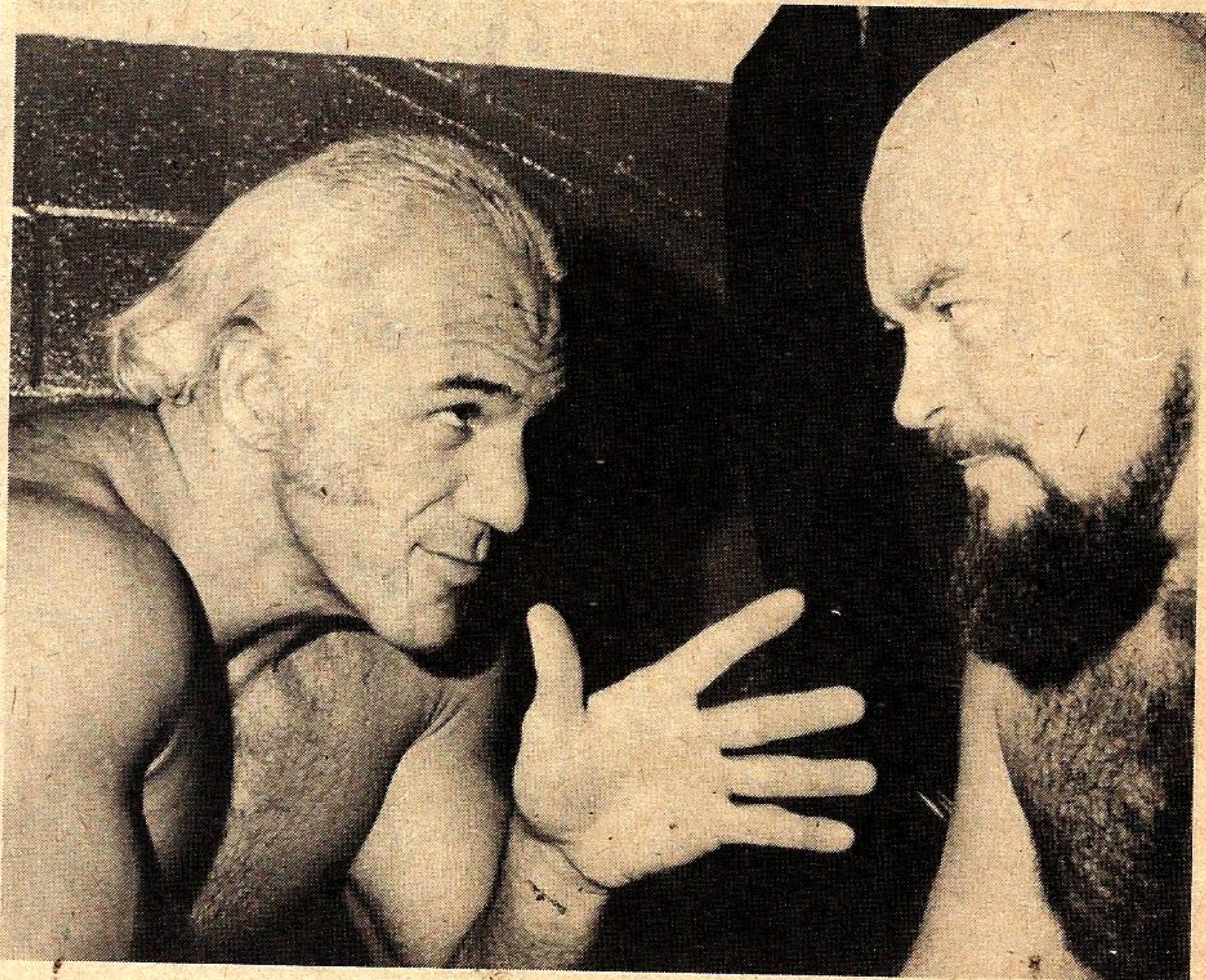
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KOLOFF AND SUPERSTAR (Continued from Page 48)



Above: Graham is successful at illegally choking Pat Barrett, but not successful in getting Kolooff to join in the mayhem. Graham never tolerates a partner disobeying his commands! Below: Kolooff and Graham appear in agreement as they discuss strategy before a match. They give a different appearance when they are in a bout!



On the night of the match, the dressing room area resembled an armed camp. Guards were posted at the doors of both Kolooff and Graham. Reporters attempting to see either wrestler were met with an unfriendly stare and the flashing of a gun by the security guards. The presence of the guards merely served to confirm the reporters' suspicions: there was

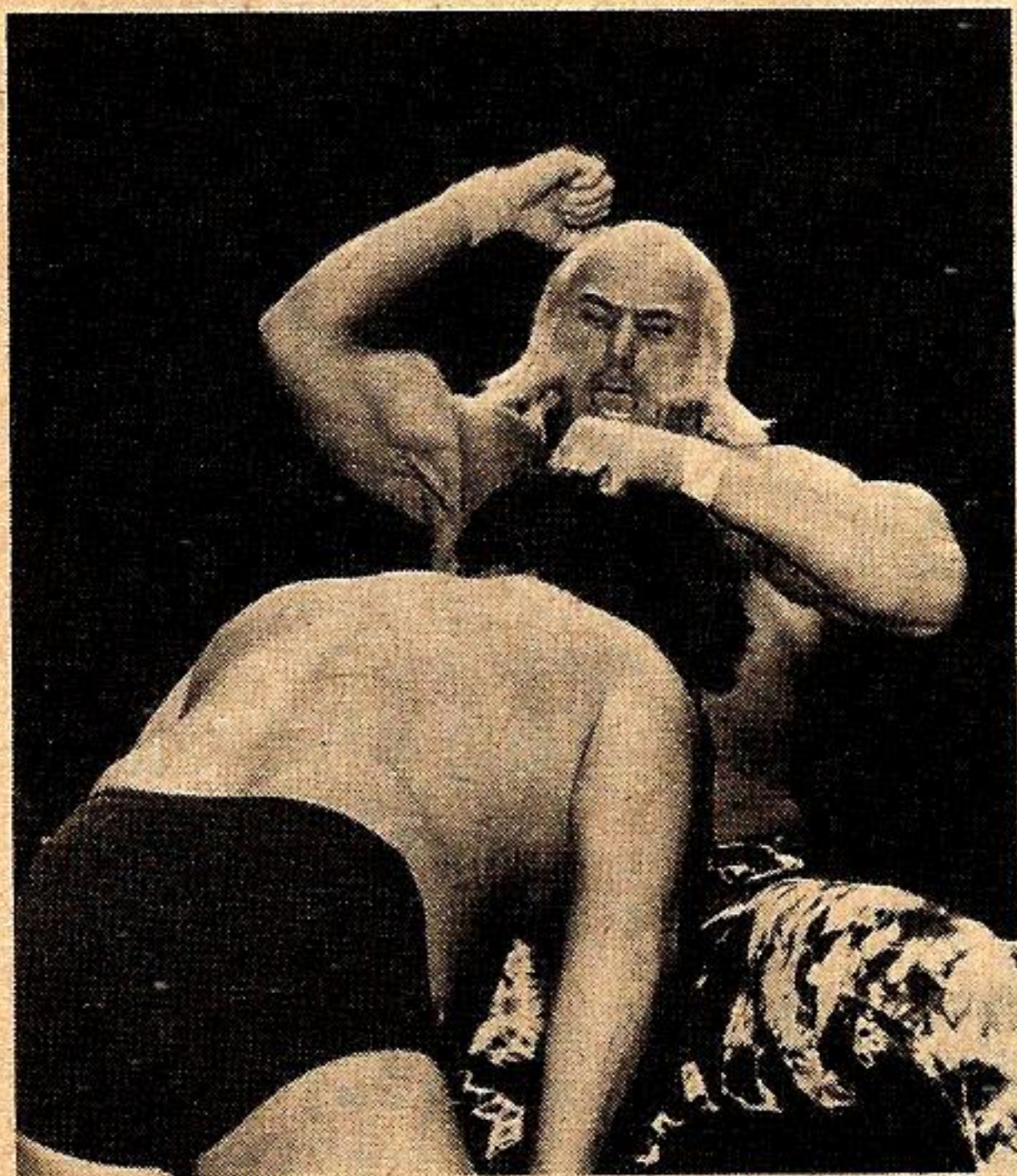
trouble between Kolooff and Graham and the difficulties were serious.

The match against Barrett and Calhoun was a repetition of the match against Parisi and Cerdan. Signals were missed. The style was sloppy. At one point when Graham was restraining Barrett, Kolooff accidentally slugged Superstar. It was not a pretty sight.

Fortunately, the referee was able to stop the contest by disqualifying Graham and Koloff for double-teaming. If there hadn't been that sudden end, the team would only have succeeded in making itself look even more foolish. It was at this point the team's managers took over.

As soon as the match was completed, the managers rushed Koloff and Graham out of the arena as fast as possible. However, they did promise the reporters there would be a small press conference the following day.

The next morning, The Grand Wizard and Captain Lou Albano faced a hostile press corps. Superstar Graham and Ivan Koloff were conspicuous in their absence.



Graham takes matters into his own hands by ruthlessly and repeatedly smashing his fist into the back of Pat's skull.

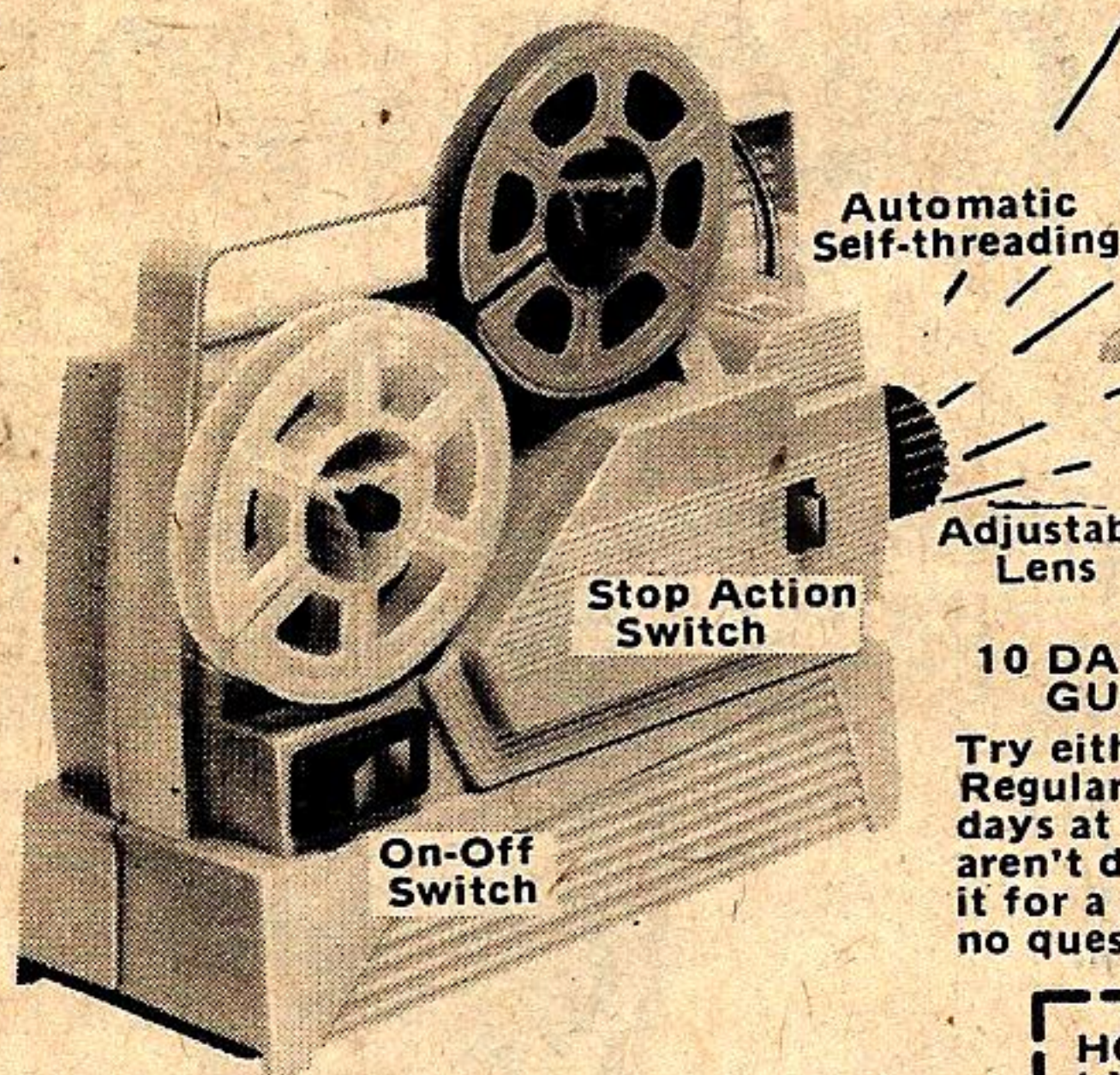
Instead of allowing a question and answer session with the press, Albano and Wizard read a statement they had prepared. In it the managers explained both Koloff and Graham had requested a short period of rest. They had no plans of breaking up the team again. They just felt it necessary to pursue some individual glory for a short time. But the team would be back together soon.

Albano then added, "Although they may not be wrestling together for three weeks—and I might add, that is all we expect this rest period will be—both men will be training together. They will be learning some new techniques. They will be back soon, and they will be better than ever!"

Yet still the doubts remain. No matter what the two managers may claim, there is trouble brewing between Ivan Koloff and Superstar Billy Graham. □

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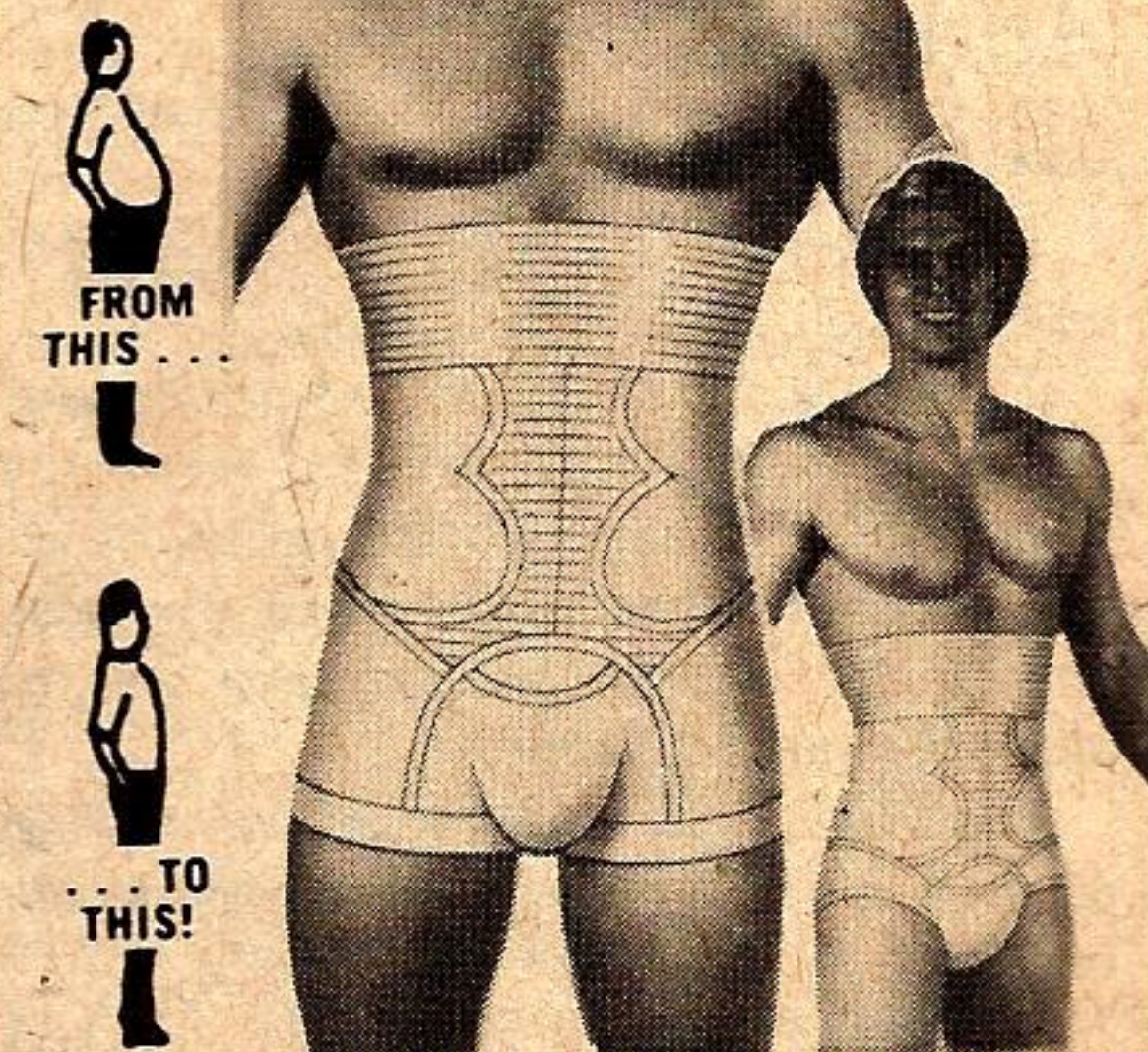
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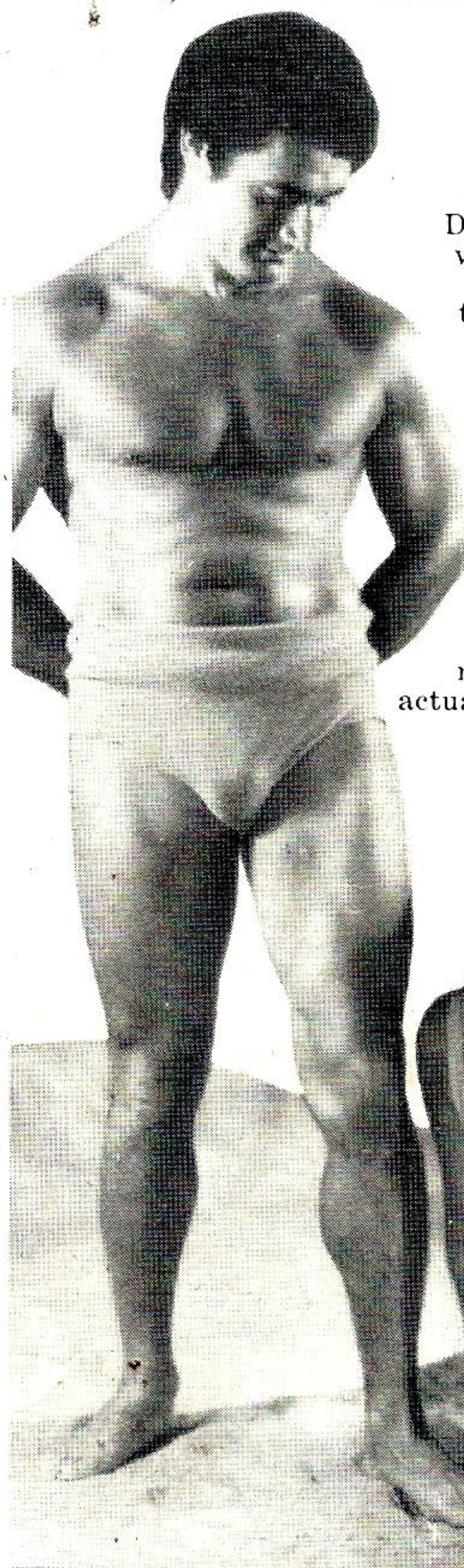
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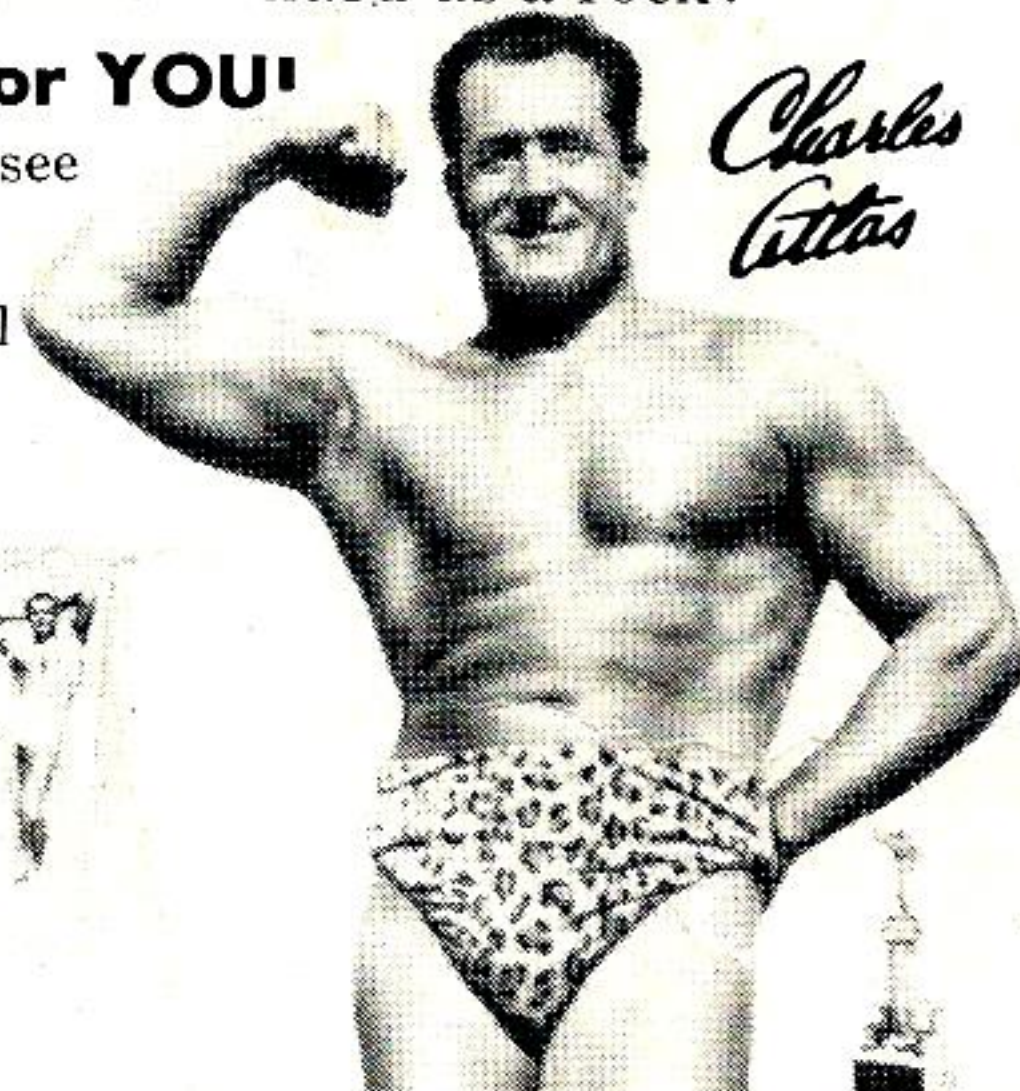
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